THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF EMPOWERMENT TO THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST YEAR PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to address the alarmingly high first year failure rates for black students in this country, by developing an intervention that unites the field of academic development with the theory of empowerment. High failure rates are explained as due to a wide range of difficulties in students' adaptation to the university, from narrow cognitive to broad socio-political factors. Academic development's attempts to address these high failure rates are reviewed and criticised for their exclusive focus on cognitive and linguistic difficulties. Empowerment theory is then proposed as providing a theoretical framework, set of guiding principles and methodology to inform a tutorial programme seeking to empower Psychology 100 students to take control of their learning. An individual level of intervention is targeted in this programme, based on the assumption that individual empowerment lay the foundation for broader processes of institutional transformation and are thus essential before students can make meaningful contribution to wider processes of changes. The intervention is then evaluated using multiple quantitative and qualitative methods. Participants in the empowerment programme score significantly higher final Psychology course marks in comparison to participants in a course revision tutorial programme and a control group matched for race and academic ability, and demonstrate a significant improvement in performance over the semester. They also consider the programme beneficial both in terms of course revision and the focus on student empowerment. Participants in the empowerment programme also score significantly higher than a comparison group on a measure of academic empowerment developed for this study. The contributions of the study to the fields of academic development and empowerment are then discussed and a set of recommendations for an empowering education is proposed.

PREFACE

This whole thesis, unless specifically indicated, is my own original work.

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CHAPTER NINE: RESULTS OF THE EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The higher education sector in South Africa has, for many years, been in a state of turmoil, marked by:

> inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along axes of race, gender, class and geographic discrimination. There are gross discrepancies in the participation rates by students from different population groups and indefensible imbalances in the ratios of black and female staff compared to whites and males. There are also past disparities between historically black and historically white institutions in terms of facilities and capacities for teaching and research
>
> (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996, p.1-2).

One of the ways universities and technikons have attempted to redress these imbalances over the past decade, has been a policy of massification or widened access for students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). This has, however, brought with it many problems, as large numbers of under-prepared students enter the tertiary sector. These students not only come from a history of grossly inadequate schooling, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science, but are also ill-equipped to handle study in a second language. Their academic skills are also based largely on the rote memorisation of material, poorly preparing them for the critical thinking, interpretation of text, and synthesis of materials required at university (Nyamapfene and Letsaka, 1995).

Universities and technikons have responded to the difficulties facing these students through the efforts of academic support (ASP) and academic/education development programmes (ADP/EDP). These programmes have consisted of a variety of forms at different institutions but generally included bridging programmes, academic skills training and literacy courses, as well as curriculum development initiatives. By the early 1990s, however, most academic development practitioners came to realise that academic skills are best taught, not in abstract form, but within the context of the disciplines being studied, and so general study skills courses were largely

replaced by the appointment of tutors, who were located within academic departments. They were responsible both for assisting students with academic difficulties related to the discipline, and for guiding the department through a process of development whereby the curriculum would become more reflective of and responsive to the changing student population (Bulman, 1996).

Between 1991 and 1995, I was employed as one such tutor in the Psychology department at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Part of my work involved the running of weekly, voluntary tutorials for first year students, to teach academic skills required for success in Psychology, and assist students with content-related difficulties.

I came to realise, however, that a focus purely on cognitive and meta-cognitive difficulties was only partially helpful and excluded the psycho-social concerns black students experienced, in their adaptation to university. I noticed for example, that students' behaviour in the voluntary tutorials I ran was often characterised by passivity, apparent helplessness, and hopelessness at the problems they encountered. When asked which areas of the course they battled with, they seemed unable to articulate difficulties or raise questions, but waited passively for the syllabus to be re-taught. A self-fulfilling prophecy seemed to exist, whereby students failed a test, became despondent, lost the motivation to work for the following test, and thus had their expectation of failure confirmed.

I hypothesised that these responses were the result of experiences of powerlessness, oppression and alienation, arising partly from the broader socio-political context of South Africa at the time, and from students' past educational experiences. These were characterised by rote learning, with teachers actively discouraging any questioning or critique of the curriculum: "from school ... one is 'taught' to memorise facts without thought processes and to reproduce those facts to pass from one standard to another. No practice has been gained in critical thinking, and now ... we are expected to do just that" (student in Boughey, 1993, p.661). These feelings persist at university, where students report feeling isolated from a curriculum to which they cannot relate, alienated from their peers and powerless to challenge what they perceive as a rigid bureaucratic administration (Coleman, 1993; Lea, 1987; Mveke, 1993 and Zweigenhaft and Cody, 1993).

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The present study is therefore an attempt to integrate the fields of academic development and empowerment by designing and evaluating a tutorial programme to address students' psycho-social as well as their cognitive concerns, based on the theory and practices of empowerment. It is hoped that such an intervention will benefit students, not only in terms of increased academic performance, but also contributing to an improved sense of control over studying, raised self esteem and increased confidence and assertiveness. Observations from the empowerment programme, results of the current study and existing literature will then be used to propose a set of guidelines for an empowering education.

The choice of a tutorial intervention may seem an odd one, considering the recent shift within the field of academic development, from addressing disadvantage through tutorial programmes, to advocating mainstream curriculum development and wider institutional transformation (Sanders and Seneque, 1992). This study rests on the assumption, however, that curriculum and institutional transformation leave unchanged students' experiences of powerlessness and thus do not equip them to participate in such wider processes. The current intervention should therefore be viewed as an initial step, empowering students to contribute to wider processes of transformation at departmental or university level.

The study has a secondary aim, namely to design a reliable and valid measure of empowerment to explore the relationship between various aspects of the multi-dimensional empowerment construct (referred to as the 'empowerment questionnaire'). It will also be used to explore the causal links between empowerment and some of the variables on which it may depend. Particular attention will be given to measuring differences in the empowerment of tutorial programme participants compared to non-participants, to determine which aspects of empowerment have been affected by participation in the programme. Should differences be found, the potential exists of the questionnaire forming a tool for determining pre- and post-intervention levels of empowerment.

The study will begin with five chapters which review the relevant literature forming the basis for the study. The first of these highlights some of the inequities in the educational sector, and

explores the adjustment difficulties encountered by black students at university. The efforts of academic support and development programmes to address some of these difficulties will then be discussed, focussing on several specific initiatives. It is argued that the majority of these approaches, with their exclusive focus on cognitive and linguistic development, fail to acknowledge the sense of alienation and helplessness faced by many black students, and hence provide only partial solutions to the problems of disadvantage. The study will then turn to empowerment theory (Rappaport, 1984a) as an alternative strategy for student development, emphasising psychological control and active community participation as the source of psychological development. Empowerment theory will be explored both in terms of its theoretical basis as well as its application to the context of education and used as the foundation for a tutorial programme for Psychology 120 students, primarily from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

The empowerment programme will then be evaluated qualitatively, using an evaluation questionnaire and focus group discussions, as well as quantitatively, in terms of students' academic performance. The above mentioned empowerment questionnaire will also be used to compare participants' scores with those of non-participants, in order to explore the impact of participation on empowerment levels. Finally the impact of the study on the fields of academic development and empowerment theory will be discussed and a model of an empowering education will be proposed.

CHAPTER TWO: INEQUITIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

2.1.   SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIES:

2.1.1. Secondary education:

The inequalities in higher education mentioned in the previous chapter, can be traced to the rise to power of the National Party in 1948 (Nyamapfene and Letseka, 1995). These inequalities became formal policy in the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which divided education along racial and ethnic lines (Bulman, 1996). Each group was served by one of 15 education departments (Nyamapfene and Letseka, 1995). Funding was allocated in a way that ensured the educational superiority of whites and excluded other race groups from a good education. By 1987 for example, the per capita expenditure in white Department of Education schools was R2508, while that for black schools controlled by the Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.) or one of the homeland states (D.E.C.), was only R477 (SAIRR Race Relations Survey, 1987-8 in Bulman, 1996).

The quality of teaching in black schools was largely inferior to that of white schools, with many young, inexperienced and underqualified teachers. In 1983, the government defined a qualified teacher as one with a matriculation and three years of professional training. According to this definition, 87% of black teachers in 1987, compared to only 2% of white teachers, were underqualified (SAIRR Race Relations Survey, 1987-8 in Bulman, 1996). Pupil-teacher ratios in black schools were also unmanageably high, averaging 41:1 in 1987, compared to 16:1 in white schools (SAIRR Race Relations Survey, 1987-8 in Bulman, 1996). These two factors led most black teachers to resort to 'survival teaching' (Nyamapfene and Letseka,1995), consisting of rote learning, lack of pupil participation and active discouragement of critical thinking.

Policy was also passed requiring English as the medium of instruction for all teaching, further disadvantaging black pupils. Not only were they now learning and writing in a second language,

but few of their teachers were themselves fluent in English. This lack of understanding and articulateness in English, further entrenched the tendency to rote learning and decreased pupils' participation in class (Agar, 1990).

In addition to these policy-governed forms of disadvantage, was the disruptive socio-political environment within which black education took place, a result both of oppressive apartheid practices, and of levels of black on black violence in townships, which, at times, bordered on civil warfare. Although the following quotation describes the world of the township child under the apartheid government in the mid 1980s, similarly high levels of violence were reported in the 1990s and in some cases persist today:

> It is a world made up of teargas, bullets, whippings, detention and death on the streets. It is an experience of military operations and night raids, of roadblocks and body searches. It is a world in which parents and friends get carried away in the night to be interrogated. It is a world where people simply disappear, where parents are assassinated and homes are petrol bombed
> (Chikane, 1986, p. 343).

In one study of 177 township adolescents in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands area, the frequency with which violent acts have been experienced and their impact on the child, becomes apparent (Killian, Govender and Higson-Smith, n.d.). 86% of subjects reported witnessing houses being attacked, 56% had their homes raided by police or vigilantes and 47% witnessed someone being killed. This violence was not limited to the home environment. Many schools were the site of violence with 73% of subjects witnessing one or more violent acts in their school. This highly dysfunctional environment had both direct and indirect impact on school performance. It led to a breakdown in the family structure, with only 11% of subjects reporting both parents as their caregivers, and almost 10% of subjects living alone. Clinical symptomatology and poor coping skills were also evident, with 68% of subjects manifesting nine or more symptoms of either Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Major Depression, 26% meeting the criteria for a clinical diagnosis, and 20% of subjects revealing suicidal ideation. Violence also impacted directly on school performance, leading to excessively high failure rates with 81% of subjects failing one or more school years.

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The above stressors have combined with apartheid policies and practices to create major gaps between the educational attainments of white pupils and those of black Africans. In 1987 for example, the matriculation pass rate for D.E.T. and homeland schools was only 56%, while that for Department of Education schools was 94% (SAIRR Race Relations Survey, 1987-8 in Bulman, 1996). Figures such as this have led Nkomo to refer to the Nationalist Party policy of black schooling as at best "a policy of benign neglect; at worst a policy that promotes compulsory ignorance" (1990, in Nyamapfene and Letseka, 1995, p. 161).

2.1.2. Tertiary education:

2.1.2.1.   Past inequitalities:

As in the school sector, tertiary education in this country has been characterised by a policy of segregation and inequality. According to the National Commission on Higher Education (1996), this inequality has existed at the following five levels:

2.1.2.1.1.   Inequalities in access and success rates:

Firstly, marked inequality has existed in terms of access to and success rates in tertiary education. In the Extension of the Universities Act of 1959, the policies of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 were applied to the higher education sector. Entry to specific universities was restricted according to race and ethnic group, and state control of courses taught and staff employed was established (Bulman, 1996). Universities were thus divided into what are now referred to as historically white universities, further subdivided into English and Afrikaans universities, and historically black universities, further split according to whether students were English, Xhosa or Zulu speaking, and whether students were black, Indian or Coloured. These universities came under the control of eight education departments. Growth in the technikon sector in the late 1970s further fragmented higher education into 21 universities, 15 technikons and 140 single discipline vocational colleges, all divided racially and ethnically, with little or no co-ordination or systematic planning between institutions (National Commission on Higher

Education, 1996). Initially, black students' only access to the better resourced, historically white institutions, was by gaining entry to a course not offered at a historically black university. In 1983, however, the highly controversial, and fiercely resisted quota system was introduced (Universities Amendment Act, No. 83, 1983, in Bulman, 1996), whereby historically white institutions were permitted a specified quota of black students. Over the next decade pressure from the institutions, and more recent strategies of widened access, bridging programmes and financial aid, led to numbers of black students at previously white institutions rising steadily. By 1993, however, black students still made up only 32% of the total tertiary student population, despite black enrolments increasing between 1986 and 1993 at an annual rate of 14% (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). When one considers that by 1995 only 12% of black people between the ages of 20 and 24 attended university or technikon, compared to a 70% participation rate by white 20-24 year olds, the racial imbalances become even clearer (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996).

Despite recent attempts to redress the above imbalances, marked racial inequalities still exist, both in terms of access to university and to specific courses. Few black students enter postgraduate and professional studies, and far fewer black students gain access to the natural sciences than to the humanities and the social sciences. This is hardly surprising, considering that the ratio of black to white pupils gaining a matriculation exemption with higher grade passes in mathematics and physical science, is only 1:60 (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996).

Significantly higher failure and dropout rates have also been experienced by black students than white students. In 1980, for example, the attrition rate for black students from the University of the Witwatersrand, reached a staggering 78% (Agar, 1987a). In 1990 the throughput rates (a measure of the percentage of enrolments graduating in any given year) for 3 year Bachelors' degrees at historically black universities was as low as 12%, compared to 21% for historically white universities and to internationally accepted normative rates of 20-30% (Bunting, 1994 in National Commission on Higher Education, 1996).

The previous general trends are well illustrated in the following tables considering examination success rates at one historically white university:

Table 2.1:   Examination success rates, first time first year students at the University of Natal

	1984:	1985:	1986:	1987:
Black:	30%	44%	53%	49%
Coloured:	62%	63%	69%	64%
Indian:	61%	61%	67%	64%
White:	61%	69%	72%	77%
Total:	63%	65%	69%	72%

(Bulman, 1996, p.46)

Similar trends have also been noted within the discipline of Psychology. Although the performance of black students has improved gradually, figures from the beginning of the last decade indicate the discrepancy that existed in the pass rates of black students compared to that of the whole (largely white) class:

Table 2.2.   Examination success rate, Psychology 1 students, University of Natal

	1988:	1989:	1990:	1991:	1992:
Whole class:	68% (N = 444)	67% (N = 378)	76% (N = 321)	76% (N = 414)	88% (N = 420)
Black students:	18% (n = 49)	20% (n = 41)	43% (n = 28)	50% (n = 44)	60% (n = 62)

(Sudworth, 1994)

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2.1.2.1.2.   Funding:

Marked inequalities have also existed in funding, with white institutions far better resourced than black ones. In 1993, for example, historically white universities produced 81% of the country's masters and doctoral graduates, compared to 5% for historically black universities and 12% for distance universities (Pouris, 1996 in National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). As the state's university funding subsidy formula gives higher weighting to postgraduate students than undergraduate, this has impacted directly on the resources of historically black and white universities.

2.1.2.1.3.   Research:

Historically white universities have had a higher research output than historically black ones, publishing 83% of all articles published by South African universities in 1993 and producing more postgraduate students as discussed above (Pouris, 1996, in National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). As the state offers research incentives, research output has further contributed to the above mentioned inequities in funding.

2.1.2.1.4.   Governance:

Until the mid 1990's, different policies of governance existed, with white institutions permitted a degree of self-regulation, while black universities were firmly under government control. Senior staff at these institutions have, until recently, been predominantly white, Afrikaans men who were staunch supporters of the National Party with conservative ideas about education (Bulman, 1996).

2.1.2.1.5.   Staff Composition:

Finally, enormous inequalities have existed (and still do exist) in staff composition, which does not come close to mirroring the racial proportions of the country's population. Despite apparent

commitment to a policy of Affirmative Action, 87% of the staff at universities and technikons are white (Verwey, 1995 in National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). The few black staff employed, tend to be concentrated on the lower rungs of the status hierarchy, with positions of power dominated by white men. In 1990, for example, 92% of university executive and administrative management members were white men (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996).

2.1.2.2.   Post-1993 changes:

The period following the African National Congress's rise to power has seen an unprecedented process of transformation in the higher education sector. Reflecting international trends towards massification (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996), universities and technikons have widened their access, particularly for black students. Accompanying this trend, has been growth and diversity in the programmes, curricula and qualifications offered, increased accreditation of prior learning experiences, and the introduction of a system of multiple entry and exit points. The number of black and female academics has also risen and management structures of most universities and technikons have widened to include a number of black executives (Brown, 1997). The previous eight education departments have amalgamated to form a single department of education, and there has been increased regional communication and co-operation between institutes (as in the formation of the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutes in KwaZulu-Natal). The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act was published in 1995, allowing for the implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The purpose of the NQF is to develop an integrated approach to education, to facilitate access to and progression through the education system and to enhance the quality of education and training (Luckett, 1997). In addition to this national process of transformation, many of the country's technikons and universities are currently undergoing internal processes of development and transformation in order to redress the educational imbalances of the past.

2.2. INEQUITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION - OTHER CONTEXTS:

The racial imbalances within South African higher education are not unique, parallelling similar difficulties experienced by minority students elsewhere. (The term 'minority' is used here to refer to groups in positions of low social status, termed 'power minorities', as distinguished from 'numerical minorities'). Minority students across the world show poorer enrolment figures, lower throughput and higher attrition rates and less progression to graduate studies compared to those from advantaged backgrounds. In the United States of America for example, blacks make up 12% of the population, but only 6.5% of students registered for undergraduate degrees, 4% of PhD students, and less than 2% of the staff at elite universities (Thomas, 1998). Black enrolments have also declined from 34% of blacks enrolling in colleges and universities in 1976, to 26% in 1985, while black graduate enrolments have declined by 19.2% over the same period (United States Bureau of the Census, 1987, in Lang and Ford, 1988). Attrition rates are also unacceptably high - a five year study of a 1973 first year cohort, found that black students dropped out at a rate of 73%, compared to an overall dropout rate of 48% (Cortina, 1980 in Suen, 1983).

Countries like the United States of America and Britain thus provide useful contexts from which to learn about the nature of difficulties facing students from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, however, the level of disadvantage facing South African black students, the numbers of students affected, and the language issues, make this context unique, demanding research into the specific experiences of South African students, and interventions relevant to this context.

The background of black students is thus characterised by disadvantage, both at school and in the wider socio-political arena. At university, these inequalities persist, with alarmingly high failure and attrition rates, poor graduation rates and limited entry into post-graduate study (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). Poor performance is concentrated at first year level (Agar, 1987a) due to particular difficulties experienced by black students adjusting to the university context. The paucity of local research exploring these concerns, however, forces comparisons to be drawn with the experiences of minority students on American campuses.

CHAPTER THREE: ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES OF FIRST YEAR BLACK STUDENTS:

Despite the changes currently taking place, the environment that black students enter at university, is in many ways, an alien one with many of them knowing that their chances of success are significantly lower than that of their peers. They are required to adopt new learning strategies that their high school education has ill-prepared them for, and learn in a second language. In addition they have few staff role models to whom they can turn for assistance.

An analysis of the range of problems experienced by new black students, is therefore an essential first step in addressing these difficulties. Most studies however explore a single factor in isolation, making it difficult to gain a holistic overview of the difficulties experienced or quantify the contributions of various factors. A notable exception however, is Van Overwalle's study (1989) which, while not focussed on the experiences of black students, provides a useful overview of the variety of social, psychological and cognitive factors which impact on academic performance. He identifies four key areas of influence in the literature, namely past performance and academic ability, social factors, locus of control and motivational factors. Past performance appears to be the best predictor of university performance, with high school performance correlating 0.5 with university performance (Wellens, 1980 in Van Overwalle, 1989). Social factors such as socio-economic status or home environment show a weak but systematic relation to university success (between 0.22 and 0.37) (White, 1982 in Van Overwalle, 1989). A weak relationship exists of 0.14 between locus of control and university performance (Findley and Cooper, 1983), while motivational factors and self esteem show a moderate relationship (0.31 to 0.4) to academic achievement (Uguroglu and Walberg, 1979 in Van Overwalle, 1989).

Van Overwalle then interviewed first year students to explore the interrelationship among the above factors using a multidimensional scaling technique. Factors were divided into external causes, such as socioeconomic status, and leisure activities, which contributed little to academic performance, and internal factors such as self-esteem and the use of appropriate study methods, which were more closely related to academic performance. Factors were also partitioned into

factors that could be controlled by students, such as choice of study, and study methods used, and factors that were less controllable, such as verbal expressiveness and difficulty of examinations. The strongest predictor of academic achievement was found to be performance on midterm class tests (r=0.65). Other factors moderately related to academic performance were self-esteem, expectations of success, and prior knowledge, (all internal, uncontrollable factors), regular study effort, timing of studying, satisfaction with choice of study, and the general efficacy of study strategies used (internal, controllable factors). Choice of a particular study method such as Bigg's (1987) deep or surface learning style was not significantly related to academic performance.

Van Overwalle contextualises his findings in terms of attribution theory (Weiner, 1986 in Van Overwalle, 1989), as well as Rotter's locus of control construct (1966), finding similar emphasis on internal, uncontrollable factors such as ability and knowledge and internal, controllable issues such as effort, interest and strategies adopted. He argues that the attributions given, impact on future motivation and performance in similar tasks and therefore influence the efficacy of remedial activities. If students believe, for example, that factors such as their choice of study strategy, or management of time caused their failure, they are likely to be more receptive to interventions designed to impact on these factors, than if they do not consider these factors responsible. Van Overwalle's study is therefore an important one, highlighting the relationship among a broad range of difficulties encountered by new students, and suggesting that analysis of the kinds of difficulties encountered is an essential precursor to strategies designed to improve performance.

Hughes' (1987) study also provides an overview of the variety of difficulties experienced by black students at historically white universities, and a useful framework within which to classify their adjustment difficulties. Using open-ended questionnaires and interviews, the experiences of black men and women at predominantly white or black American colleges were compared. Hughes suggests four areas of difficulty encountered by new black students (socio-political, campus-ecological, interpersonal and intra-psychic factors), finding that these difficulties are far more prevalent among black students on predominantly white than black campuses. Together these factors constitute a classification device to make sense of the wide body of literature focussing on isolated difficulties experienced by black students.

3.1. SOCIO-POLITICAL FACTORS:

As emphasised above, education takes place within a broader social, political and economic context that impacts directly on students' adjustment to university, through such factors as government spending on education, apartheid policies of education and availability of financial aid. At the same time the broader context impacts indirectly on students, leading to such factors as experiences of racism on campus, feelings of alienation and isolation, and patterns of stress and coping. According to Moll (1987) it is this merging of psycho-social, economic and political issues which makes it difficult to address the academic difficulties of South African black students.

One socio-political factor to impact on black students' adjustment is the power difference between themselves and their largely white lecturers. This difference is at the root of what appear to be cognitive issues such as inability to challenge statements made by a lecturer, ability to discuss a reading among friends, but not in class, or silence in tutorial situations. According to Social Identity Theory, all social groups exist within a status hierarchy. The tendency of a group to compare themselves to other groups and challenge their position in society, depends on their perception of the hierarchy as either stable or unstable, and fair or unjust (Tajfel, 1981). Using this argument, black students' apparent passivity could be related to their perception that the large power gap between themselves and their lecturers is both fixed and also a fair system as a result of their lecturers' greater knowledge. Hence they are less likely to challenge their lecturers' viewpoints and more likely to memorise by rote whatever they are told, and are thus reduced to a state of helplessness when this strategy proves unsuccessful.

Acceptance of the power imbalances between black students and their lecturers is further reinforced and legitimised by the racial differences between themselves and staff. The apartheid government attempted to socialise black people to accept their inferior status as inevitable and thus not to challenge the existing status hierarchy. At university therefore, black students are faced with two messages signalling acceptance of the status quo - one the result of their lecturer's greater education and the second the result of their race. This results in feelings of passivity,

helplessness and powerlessness, highlighting the relationship between socio-political, psychological and academic factors in influencing black students' performance.

A useful analysis of the interface between issues of race and power on university campuses is provided by Brown (1997) in a discourse analysis of the experiences of a group of rural, black, female students at a historically white university. She argues that deep-rooted issues of racism are embedded in the power relations between staff and students, resulting in educational institutions being "probably the area where the devastating effects of apartheid will linger longest" (Gerwel, 1991 in Brown, 1997, p.4).

Brown reports on two incidents of unrest on the campus under study, in 1996, using these to illustrate the tensions between staff and student positions on the issue of race. Students considered themselves to be the victims of widespread institutional racism at such levels as allocation of financial aid, academic performance and communication with staff. The university, on the other hand, viewed racism as positioned within particular incidents and individuals and thus able to be eradicated. Brown describes strategies used by the university to downplay allegations of institutional racism and reduce it to an individual problem. These include encouraging students to list grievances, as a way of defusing student outrage, positioning the university as committed to students and blaming the victims through allegations of reverse racism. Brown goes on to advocate Social Constructionism as a means of overcoming the dualism between individual and institutional understandings of racism by focussing on discourse as constructing individuals, social relations and social practices and thus bringing together the individual and the institutional.

One example of the way in which discourse constructs and reinforces social relations is the use of the term 'disadvantaged' by universities. Used as a synonym for 'black students' the term appears to remove or tippex out racially based categories, yet still calls attention to the issue of race, just as tippex leaves a mark on a page:

> The use of the word 'disadvantage' (where 'black' is implied) allows those who use it to acquire some distance from race and hence in some ways to 'tippex' it, so that it is still there but can no longer be 'seen'
>
> (Brown, 1997, p.65.)

The term disadvantage thus functions as an instrument of social control, establishing and reinforcing unequal power relations between needy, dependent black students and the university who can rescue them from their disadvantages.

Sedlacek (1987) also explores black students' experiences of racism on white campuses, claiming that this begins with their admission to university. This is either on the basis of standardised tests and school marks shown to be less predictive of black students' success than for white students, or on the basis of alternative selection procedures and lower standards. This thus impacts on their self-esteem and perception of themselves as disadvantaged (Tracey and Sedlacek, 1985). Once on campus, racism pervades all aspects of their experience, including residence life (Piedmont, 1967 in Sedlacek, 1987), relationships with other students (Minatoya and Sedlacek, 1984 in Sedlacek, 1987) and interactions with staff (Smith, 1980 in Sedlacek, 1987).

Recent transformation initiatives at South African universities are an attempt to redress some of the above socio-political concerns. Course content and research has often been criticised for a lack of contextualisation. Claims are made that knowledge produced and taught is largely based on Western epistemology and is unresponsive to the needs of African communities and a rapidly modernising economy. Universities are also accused of ignoring issues of multiculturalism, or the development of a culture of tolerance (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). The implementation of the National Qualifications Framework with its emphasis on responsiveness at all levels of operation, can be seen as an attempt to address some of these criticisms:

> Responsiveness implies that higher education should take seriously the problems and challenges presented by the societal context in which it operates. In the case of South Africa, this context is that of a developing and modernising country in a state of transition, emerging from the consequences of racial discrimination and oppression...The features of this context will have to be reflected in the contents, the focus and the delivery mode of the programmes that are offered, as well as in the institutional missions and policies that are developed. It will also have to find expression in the organisation and

administration of the system, its decision-making processes, governance structures and funding model

(National Commission on Higher Education, 1996, p. 79.)

3.2. CAMPUS ECOLOGICAL FACTORS:

Black students also experience difficulties related to organisational factors in the campus environment (Hughes, 1987), such as the availability of financial aid and interaction with the university administration. Few black students have previous experience of dealing with large, bureaucratic institutions (Haettenschwiller, 1971 in Gibbs, 1973), and hence often feel overwhelmed by such activities as registration, securing financial aid and selecting courses. In South Africa, these difficulties are compounded by black students' language difficulties and long delays in securing financial aid, making the registration process long and confusing.

Brown's (1997) analysis of racism in the university, discussed in the previous section, highlights the interplay between socio-political and campus ecological factors. While universities try to downplay issues of race and racism, replacing them with a focus on disadvantage, campus ecological factors continually remind black students of their inferiority and dependence on the university. Hence they are the recipients of alternative selection procedures and academic development programmes, rely on financial aid, and form the majority of the students spending many long hours in university administration queues. They also experience high failure rates and are more often excluded on academic grounds than their peers.

One of the biggest stressors they face is the availability of financial aid. Agar's (1990) comparison of problems encountered by black first year and senior students who attended an academic support programme, revealed that lack of money to cover academic and personal needs, and inability to afford textbooks, were two of the most severe and persistent problems experienced. Many black South African students come from low-income families and are granted only partial bursaries, not covering residence, food or textbook costs. Those granted full bursaries, often have to sacrifice food or book allowances to finance courses they have failed.

They are also denied bank loans, as they are unable to provide collateral to cover these, and are thus faced with high levels of uncertainty and anxiety concerning the financing of their degrees.

These difficulties are not limited to South African universities. In an 11 year study of black students' adjustment problems on an American campus, June, Curry and Gear (1990) found that financial difficulties were consistently the top ranked problem, across all years of the study, and that these difficulties had a significant impact on academic achievement. In a comparison of the experiences of black and white students on primarily black and white campuses, Westbrook, Miyores and Roberts, (1978) also found that lack of financial assistance was a significant problem for black students on both campuses, but was not reported as a problem by white students.

3.3. INTERPERSONAL FACTORS:

Hughes' (1987) third category of adjustment difficulty is interpersonal factors, including communication difficulties between staff and students, black and white students and between black students of differing socio-economic backgrounds, availability of social support, and involvement in community activities on and off campus. These factors have been found to show a weak, but systematic relationship (0.2 - 0.4) to academic achievement (Van Overwalle, 1989).

Gibbs' (1973) experiences as the first black student counsellor on a predominantly white American campus, led her to believe that many of the difficulties experienced by black students can be traced to incompatible expectations of university study, held by black students and white lecturers. She argues that white academics expect that black students will be assimilated into the university, with few changes to existing university structures. Staff are ignorant of the special needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and expect that black students will compete on a par with white ones, despite the more privileged education enjoyed by white students. They also expect that black students will adapt to the existing cultural life of the university and are bewildered when black students report feeling alienated and culturally isolated.

Gibbs (1973) reports that black students, on the other hand, expect the university to be more culturally diverse, both in the activities offered and the lifestyles expressed. They therefore feel alienated from the dominant white culture on campus and seek to establish a distinct identity. This often involves greater contact with black communities off campus, and lack of participation in what they perceive as activities targeting white students. They also expect that university will have similar academic requirements to high school, and are thus overwhelmed by the heavier workload and new demands for critical thinking and interpretation of material. They also expect greater flexibility on the part of the university, in responding to their individual needs, battling to understand for example, that the university cannot provide unlimited financial aid to students.

Gibbs relates the conflict in expectation to the lack of exposure on the part of staff and students to multicultural issues, and also to the fact that many black students are first generation students. She suggests a number of strategies to overcome the problem, including greater support services, staffed by people sensitive to the needs of black students, greater interracial contact whereby students can develop a shared social identity, and more contact between staff and students.

Comparative evidence from local campuses is sorely lacking. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests similar experiences to those mentioned by Gibbs. As on American campuses, local black students often choose not to participate in activities perceived as dominated by white students, such as Rag or Orientation Week. Like their American counterparts they also experience faulty expectations regarding the type of learning required at university and often respond with rote learning and inability to provide more than a summary of readings in an essay.

One of the few local studies to explore black students' interpersonal difficulties is that of Coleman (1993) who finds similar incompatible expectations among staff and students at the historically black University of Fort Hare, regarding the causes of students failure. Two areas of difficulty emerged from the results. Firstly, staff emphasised cognitive difficulties like over-reliance on rote memorisation, and inability to integrate, organise and interpret information as the source of failure, while students claimed that too much material had to be learnt and they were inadequately prepared by lecturers for the requirements of university study. The second area of difficulty related to psycho-social problems and comprised 60% of the problems mentioned by

students as affecting their academic performance. Students reported loneliness, low self-esteem and a lack of social support, while lecturers assumed that students had large support networks. Lecturers therefore considered political disturbances to be the only psycho-social factor affecting performance. This study is one of few South African studies to directly measure the attributions for failure given by black students themselves. It also highlights the importance of non-cognitive factors in accounting for black students' academic performance, suggesting that interventions focussed only on the teaching of study skills are insufficient to improve performance.

Another interpersonal factor to impact on black students' adjustment is the issue of social support. Several studies suggest that black students on predominantly white campuses report poor interpersonal relations, loneliness and a lack of integration into the campus community (Gibbs, 1975; Jay and D'Augelli, 1991 and Suen, 1983). Research also suggests, however, that social support mediates against these difficulties and allows for improved integration (Kessler and McLeod, 1985 in Jay and D'Augelli, 1991). Because of the links between loneliness and social isolation on the one hand, and loneliness and academic performance on the other (Suen, 1983), one would expect availability of social support to be positively correlated with academic performance. Studies suggest only a weak relation between these two factors, however, (Jay and D'Augelli, 1991; Van Overwalle, 1989), although social support may influence academic performance in a complex, indirect way. Poor support may lead to depression and loneliness, which lower students' motivation to attend classes and submit course work, hence causing them to fail. Multivariate, longitudinal studies are therefore needed, such as the Van Overwalle (1989) study mentioned above, which explore the complex interactions between a variety of causal and mediating factors which combine to influence performance.

Black students also experience difficulties in terms of inter-racial interactions and the development of a racial identity. Normal adolescent identity crisis symptoms of role confusion, alienation and anxiety (Erikson, 1959 in Gibbs, 1973) are compounded by their awareness of separateness from white students (Gibbs, 1973). A three year study of black students' use of mental health facilities on a predominantly white American campus (Gibbs, 1975) found that half of the black clients presented with problems related to identity conflicts and confusion concerning their interactions with other black and white students. Students' inability to resolve

these conflicts resulted in high levels of distress, confusion concerning their core identity and poor academic performance.

Other studies find similarly high levels of cultural alienation and poor interracial interaction among black students. Smith, for example, describes black students on white campuses as caught in a "whirlwind of confusing racial identities" (1980 in Smith, 1981, p. 300). On one hand they perceive campus as a hostile environment where they are viewed as less than equal to their white peers, are required to abandon their cultural heritage to fit in, and where the curriculum is foreign to their experiences. On the other hand, they respond by joining all-black social and community groups, discouraged by the university in the supposed interests of cross-cultural integration. Hence they are caught in a catch-22 situation, constantly reminded of their separate racial identity but also discouraged from those activities that might overcome their isolation and alienation.

Hughes (1987) also explores black students' experiences of cultural isolation which is attributed to the dominant white culture on campus. She argues that many black students cope with this alienation by actively deferring their psycho-social and cultural development until they have graduated, indicated in the following statement: "I have decided to tough it out. I will resurface and continue my life when this sentence is over" (Hughes, 1987, p. 540).

It is therefore clear that the interpersonal environment encountered by black students on white campuses is a stressful one leading to high levels of loneliness, racial conflicts and alienation from campus life. These factors in turn impact on students' academic performance and likelihood of dropping out of university (Suen, 1983). Placed in a position of low status many of these interpersonal experiences of black students are clearly different from those of white students, suggesting the need for special interventions aimed directly at their adjustment difficulties.

3.4. INTRA-PSYCHIC FACTORS:

Hughes (1987) uses this category to include inner experiences as they impact on adjustment, focussing on experiential, emotional factors like alienation and feelings of powerlessness. I

would argue however, that cognitive and linguistic factors play such a crucial role in South African black students' academic adjustment, and make up such a large proportion of local studies in this area, that there is merit in considering them separately from other psychological factors.

3.4.1. <u>Cognitive and linguistic factors:</u>

The academic performance of all students is influenced by a host of cognitive factors. Van Overwalle (1989), for example, found a variety of cognitive factors to have moderate relation to examination performance, including regular studying ($r = 0.31$), understanding of course content ($r = 0.29$), and verbal expressiveness ($r = 0.29$). An interesting, and somewhat unexpected finding was that although students' perception of the efficacy of their study methods was a small but significant predictor of examination performance, ($r = 0.34$), the use of specific surface or deep learning strategies (Biggs, 1987) did not predict academic achievement.

Distinctions between deep and surface learning strategies are common (Biggs, 1987; Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983), and have been used to explain a host of academic difficulties (Barnsley, 1992 and Bulman, 1996). Surface learning involves rote memorisation of discrete facts, with no attempt to integrate these. The student is extrinsically motivated, and studying is merely a means to the end of receiving a qualification. The deep learner, however, focuses on the underlying meaning of material, to maximise understanding. This student is intrinsically motivated, and reads widely, integrating information and applying it to his/her own experiences (Biggs, 1987).

Findings of the many studies measuring these two approaches suggest two key patterns. Firstly lack of interest, unfamiliar material and an overloaded curriculum, lead to over-reliance on surface learning, while enthusiasm and interest in the course lead to deep level learning (Entwistle, 1981 in Giraud and Frielick, 1994). Secondly students adapt their strategy to suit the assessment criteria used, adopting a surface strategy, for example, if rote-learnt answers are required (Gow and Kember, 1990 in Giraud and Frielick, 1994).

In South Africa academic development practitioners have widely considered the surface learning pattern as the root of many black students' academic difficulties. Barnsley (1992), for example, argues that they often claim to understand course content, but when tested, have only surface knowledge, battling to recognise the difference between learning discrete bits of information and deeper understanding of a text. Nyamapfere and Letsaka (1995) link this over-reliance on surface learning among black students to inadequate preparation for the demands of university study both due to poor secondary education, and to usually being a first-generation student.

Over-reliance on rote learning leads to other weaknesses, including poor writing skills, (Wood, 1998) and helps to explain high levels of plagiarism among black students. Successful essay writing requires textual interpretation and synthesis of the views of several sources into a coherent argument, features of deep learning. Many black students reportedly cannot do this, and resort to copying from the text, assuming that if an idea has been published it must be correct. Coleman (1993) also links surface learning to poor examination preparation and time management, finding that black students in her survey spent between 45 and 60 hours learning for one examination.

Development of deep learning is often viewed as a panacea for black students' difficulties. At the University of the Western Cape it is the main aim of student development (Mahatey, Kagee and Naidoo, 1994), while the University of the Witwatersrand consider it integral to all curricula:

> An important objective of the University is to provide the community with high calibre, well-educated and thinking people. Essential to the achievement of this objective is the student's conversion from the surface-learning or rote-learning strategy characteristic of school leavers to a deep level learning style. It should not be possible to achieve a Wits degree by rote learning alone
>
> (University of the Witwatersrand, 1991, in Giraud and Frielick, 1994, p. 220).

The University of Natal also emphasis deep level learning as one of its primary objectives:

> Curricula and research design...need to be organised in such a way that scholars are produced who go beyond the isolated facts, who make connections across disciplines,

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who help shape a more coherent view of knowledge and a more integrated and authentic
view of life   (University of Natal, 1994, p.5).

Results of a three year survey at the University of the Witwatersrand, however, suggest an inconsistency between commitment to deep level learning at policy level and the implementation thereof. In all faculties except for Arts, surface learning was found to be more common than deep learning at undergraduate level and consistently used in all years of study. A marked decline in surface learning was, however, found in all faculties at Honours level (Giraud and Frielick, 1994).

Many causal factors may explain these findings. Teaching strategies and curricula clearly affect the learning strategy used. Abrupt changes to deep learning at Honours level parallel the requirements for in-depth understanding and application of knowledge, while curriculum overload and over-reliance on lecturing as the main form of information delivery at undergraduate level, account for higher levels of surface learning. Assessment also plays a role, with courses relying on written examinations and testing retention of content leading to students' adoption of surface strategies. Inadequacies in black schooling are also contributing factors as is the difficult transition from school to university and insufficient orientation to the academic requirements of university.

Giraud and Frielick's (1994) study demonstrates that the commitment to deep learning shown in university policy documents, rarely filters down to the level of teaching practices, which continue to rely on traditional lecturing and assessment of rote learning. The academic development literature, it could be argued, suffers from a similar abstraction, with greater emphasis on broad transformational issues than on strategies by which these policies can be implemented (Boughey, 1994; Frielick, 1993 and Sanders and Seneque, 1992). Academic development has contributed to students' reliance on surface learning. Academic skills and literacy courses, for example, focus on the teaching of a set of generic academic skills. Instead of transferring this knowledge to other courses, however, students view academic skills as yet another body of content to be rote learnt and passed (Blunt,1992 and Wood,1998). By emphasising skills instead of content, attention is also diverted away from the complexities of a

text to generic skills, resulting in learning that is "superficial, bookish and ultimately inconsequential" (Wood, 1998, p.90).

Two other cognitive difficulties to receive considerable attention in the academic development literature are inadequately developed academic skills (Agar, 1990; Nyamapfene and Letsaka, 1995 and Savage, 1993) and language difficulties (Agar, 1990; Coleman, 1993 and Wood, 1998). The former is perceived by both staff and students as one of the major causes of black students' failures (Coleman, 1993), and forms the basis for many academic development interventions (Grewar, 1987; Pandor, 1991 and Starfield and Hart, 1991a). Language difficulties include slow reading speed, poor essay writing and an inability to articulate an argument. At school black students' progress was hampered by teachers who were, themselves, second language speakers, while at university they are overwhelmed by the complexities of learning from first language speakers with little experience of the difficulties facing second language learners.

Cognitive difficulties thus affect all aspects of learning, including the management of time, reliance on rote learning and class participation. The tendency exists, however, for staff to overemphasise their importance and show little awareness of the impact of material and psycho-social factors which are just as central to black students' adjustment to university (Agar, 1987b).

3.4.2. **Psychological and emotional factors:**

Black students face many psychological adjustment difficulties although very little local research has focussed on these, forcing conclusions to be drawn from the experiences of African-American students. As mentioned in section 3.3 the experience of being a minority student on a white campus is a stressful one, with academic anxieties compounded by feelings of alienation from a culture very different to their own (Hughes, 1987). In one of the few South African studies to explore these issues Coleman (1993) suggests that psychological concerns are widespread among black students, with over half of the difficulties affecting academic performance of a psychosocial nature, such as low self-esteem, lack of a support network and loneliness.

Suen (1983) focuses on black students' feelings of alienation, distinguishing between three aspects of alienation, namely feelings of meaninglessness and loss of direction, loss of control over one's studies and powerlessness, and feelings of loneliness. To clarify the distinction between these components, meaninglessness can be thought of as a sense of existential alienation, loss of control as academic alienation, and loneliness as social alienation. Although black students scored higher than white ones on all three components, lower levels of the first two components (but not loneliness) were found in comparison to earlier studies. This may be due to an increase in academic development programmes, lowering feelings of powerlessness and loss of direction, but not students' sense of isolation. Similar findings of loneliness and marginality are reported by Hughes (1987), Zea, Reisen, Beil and Caplan (1997) and Zweigenhaft and Cody (1993).

The few South African studies in this area also report high levels of alienation among black students on historically white university campuses. In a series of semi-structured interviews with black Psychology I students at the University of Cape Town, Lea (1987) found strong feelings of racial alienation, starting with Orientation Week, which subjects claimed oriented them to the social interests of white students and established their feelings of cultural difference. This alienation was then entrenched in course content that had little relevance to subjects' experiences, and in the wider university community, where they felt that their needs were under-represented:

> The whites run the show, most students are white - it's a white place. I battle academically, almost one could say because I'm not white. I felt that nowhere, not even in one piece of course content, was there anything for me
>
> (student in Lea, 1987, p. 83).

The loss of control over one's studies, or academic alienation described by Suen (1983), above, is a common experience among local black students, according to Barnsley (1992). In a useful analogy she compares the experiences of black science student to novice dart players:

> It is my experience that many of the students I have encountered perceive learning to be a somewhat random process. In other words they see learning as being rather like a game of darts where one throws randomly in the hope of hitting something and sometimes one is

lucky and hits the bull's eye and sometimes one is not. This idea results in students not feeling responsible for their own learning and creates a sense of helplessness

(Barnsley, 1992, p.31).

Students often respond to this lack of control by giving up and retreating into a state of learned helplessness (Whitman, Spendlove and Clark, 1986). Loss of control also leads to a state of isolation as students fail to form the relations with peers or staff who will provide support in their studies (Barnsley, 1992). Few black students approach staff for help, either due to fear of angering the staff member, denial of their difficulties, or lack of awareness that they are not coping until they fail the course. Students also develop a set of negative feelings and thought patterns about their apparent lack of ability, termed 'self efficacy' by Bandura (1997). This can lead to disillusionment and depression (Barnsley, 1992). These negative thoughts become entrenched, resulting in enduring beliefs that are resistant to change, and that lead to reduced effort spent on that discipline. This in turn confirms their beliefs when they then fail the course.

Other psychological difficulties which impact on academic performance are low self-esteem and self-confidence (Holmbeck and Wandrei, 1993 and Mooney, Sherman and Lo Presto, 1991). A pattern of low self esteem among black South African students is generally found. Sixty percent of the students interviewed by Coleman (1993) reported low self-esteem and unhappiness at university, while 41% of students in Lea's (1987) study described low confidence and self-esteem. These results can be explained both as the result of the academic alienation and social isolation referred to above (Suen, 1983), and as due to the wider socio-political issue of being a member of an oppressed group (which would influence existential alienation): "We find that in the life experience of the African, there is hardly any situation in his life in which his sense of self esteem is nourished...his subjective experience is one of feeling emasculated" (Manganyi, 1973, p.10-11).

Some studies, on the other hand, find evidence of higher self-esteem for black than white students once educational attainment is controlled (Lay and Wakstein, 1985). Two theoretical explanations for this are Sub-cultural Encapsulation (McCarthy, Rigsby and Yancy, 1972 in Lay

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and Wakstein, 1985) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981). The former argues that black students replace dominant White Anglo-Saxon Protestant values of independence and individual achievement with their own community-oriented cultural values. This emphasis on the group provides social support which elevates self-esteem. It also leads to the dominance of external attributions for success and failure, while white students are governed by cultural factors of individualism and rely on internalised attributions. Evidence to support this view comes from the finding that black South African matriculants are more likely to attribute academic failures to external factors than black Americans as a way of maintaining a positive self-esteem (Lobhan, 1975 in Howcroft, 1990).

According to Social Identity Theory self esteem is closely related to group membership (Tajfel, 1981). Positive self esteem is derived through social comparison along dimensions on which the ingroup is positively accentuated. If they compare poorly with the comparison group, however, self esteem is lowered. At university, black students become aware of their own inferior academic performance in comparison to white students, due to the ecological markers (such as alternative selection and academic development programmes) described by Brown (1997) in section 3.2. Group membership thus becomes salient and they seek to boost group esteem. Several strategies exist to achieve this, including psychological mobility into the dominant white campus culture, changing the comparison group to one poorer than them, (such as black people not accepted into university), or social creativity. Here new comparison categories are introduced on which black people rate positively (such as a sense of community). This explains the higher self esteem found among blacks in the 1960s than 1980s due to earlier efforts of the Black Consciousness Movement to elevate their sense of community (Macrone,1975 in Howcroft, 1990). A fourth strategy is direct competition with the comparison group as in the protest campaigns described in section 3.1.

Two further difficulties are failure to make realistic performance appraisals and a lack of confidence, with Lea (1987) finding that 60% of black students are too afraid to approach their lecturer. Barnsley (1992) and Sedlacek (1987) attribute this to poor interracial communication, leaving students embarrassed at appearing incompetent, afraid of angering their lecturer, or

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anxious about articulating their concerns. The combination of unrealistic appraisals and poor staff-student interaction at predominantly white universities therefore creates a no-win situation, where students are either unaware that they have a problem, or too anxious to do anything about it.

3.5.   CRITIQUE:

As illustrated above, the literature on the adaptational difficulties of black students is extensive. I have, however, identified three key weaknesses with work in this area.

Firstly South African studies have focussed almost exclusively on cognitive and meta-cognitive difficulties, while excluding those of a psychological and interpersonal nature. An overview of the 1992 and 1993 South African Association for Academic Development conference proceedings (Sharwood, 1992a; Boughey and Leibowitz, 1993), reveals a proliferation of topics such as critical thinking, language learning and curriculum development. Almost no papers, however, are devoted to psycho-social experiences, despite their demonstrated impact on academic performance.

Secondly there have been few longitudinal studies exploring which adjustment difficulties fade over time, and which become enduring problems. The possibility exists for example, of a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby initial feelings of helplessness and alienation are reinforced by failure on a first class test, and thus become a relatively stable trait of learned helplessness resistant to later intervention. Agar's (1990) study, although not longitudinal in nature, is one of the few South African studies to explore both the severity and persistence of problems experienced by black participants in an academic support programme (ASP). Problems of black first year students currently attending the ASP were compared with those of senior students who had attended the ASP in their first year of study. Difficulties listed as both severe and persistent included financial difficulties, motivation, heavy work loads and reading speed, while expressing oneself in English was reported to be less of a problem by senior students than by first years. This study therefore

highlights those difficulties, such as motivation and reading speed, which require immediate intervention if they are not to affect students' long-term performance.

A third weakness is the absence of studies exploring the characteristics of successful black students. Such studies could identify factors which mediate against some of the adjustment difficulties described in this chapter.

Perhaps the most important weakness of work in this area is its narrow focus. Most studies explore a single area of difficulty, with few studies on the relative contribution of different factors to academic performance or presenting a holistic picture of the range of difficulties experienced. Notable exceptions are the work of Van Overwalle (1989) and Hughes (1987) mentioned above.

In addition to the above weaknesses are two areas of debate in the literature. The first concerns two inter-linked issues, namely whether the difficulties described above are unique to black students, as well as whether differences exist in the adjustment difficulties of blacks on predominantly white or predominantly black campuses.

No direct comparisons have been made between students at South African historically black and historically white universities, although cross-study comparison suggests that black students experience adjustment difficulties at both types of institution. Coleman's (1993) finding of low self-esteem among 60% of students sampled at the historically black, Fort Hare University, for example, parallels Lea's (1987) finding that 41% of black students sampled at the historically white University of Cape Town, experience low self esteem and lack of confidence.

Most local studies, however, suffer from a narrowness of focus to the experiences of students at one institution, or even within one faculty or department, with few comparisons across institutions. Local studies similar to that of Hughes' (1987) are therefore needed. Her phenomenological comparison of the experiences of black students at predominantly white and black universities in the United States of America, found them to be far happier on black campuses, where they experienced positive intellectual and interpersonal growth, while on white

campuses they perceived their environment as hostile, discriminatory and isolating. Students dealt with this by actively delaying emotional and socio-cultural development until they had completed their studies, or by turning to an African-American community outside of the university to meet their affiliation needs.

The lack of comparative data has led critics to question whether the adjustment difficulties described above are unique to black students, warranting different interventions, or whether they are experienced by all new students. Gibbs (1973) identified the following problems among black students on predominantly white campuses: identity crises, interpersonal difficulties, poor academic performance, difficulties establishing autonomy from family and community, control of sexual and aggressive urges, and career confusion (Gibbs, 1973). Many of these concerns are not unique to black students. Potkay and Fullerton (1973, in Westbrook *et al.*, 1978), identified fifteen common concerns among white students, which overlap considerably with those proposed by Gibbs. Cheatham (1975 in Westbrook *et al.*, 1978) also found a 79% overlap in the counselling services and referral issues on predominantly black and white campuses, suggesting that many of these difficulties are experienced by both black and white students.

One of the few studies to directly compare the experiences of black students with those of white students found that although their experiences overlapped, black students reported more academic difficulties, financial problems and racial tensions than white students did. At predominantly white institutions black students reported high levels of interracial conflict, while at black universities they experienced intra-racial conflict, suggesting that a sensitivity to racial issues affects blacks' interactions, regardless of whether they are interacting with peers of their own, or other race groups. White students however, perceived racial conflicts as among their least problematic areas.

The finding that cultural and racial alienation separates black and white experiences is common to several studies. Gibbs (1973), for example, suggests that although many problems are experienced by both black and white students, black students experience a marginal ethnic identity and disadvantaged status as a result of being a minority student. This feeling of separateness from

other students leads to high levels of anxiety, alienation and powerlessness. Suen (1983) also refers to black students' greater sense of alienation due to their minority status. Lea (1987) also argues that black students on historically white campuses experience low identification with the university, as a result of racial issues and the perceived under-representation of their needs.

There is also much evidence that black students in South Africa experience greater academic difficulty than white ones. They come from disadvantaged school backgrounds (Agar, 1990), have poorer academic skills (Coleman, 1993) and experience higher failure (Bulman, 1996) and attrition rates (Lang and Ford, 1988) than white students. Black students, therefore, do experience greater adjustment difficulty than white students, at both predominantly white or black institutions, although at white ones they experience more inter-racial tension and cultural alienation.

Although South African studies have focussed on the academic difficulties of black students, it appears that many of the difficulties experienced are of a non-cognitive, psycho-social nature. Hence the second area of debate in the literature concerns the relationship between cognitive and non-cognitive factors in black students' adjustment to university.

Results suggest that psycho-social factors are as important as cognitive ones in predicting black students' adjustment to and success at university. The Non-Cognitive Questionnaire (NCQ) (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1976 in Tracey and Sedlacek, 1985) measures eight non-cognitive variables related to black students' academic success including self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, dealing with racism and availability of support. Tracey and Sedlacek (1985) used the NCQ and traditional Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to predict academic success in a big sample of black and white students, finding that a combination of SAT and NCQ scores was highly predictive of success among black students. SAT scores alone did not predict black students' success, but NCQ scores alone did although they did not predict white students' success. These results indicate that different factors predict white and black performance, and that a combination of cognitive and non-cognitive factors best predicts the success of black students. Traditional academic predictors, therefore, seem to have little value alone in predicting black student success.

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The above findings are supported by several other studies. Jay and D'Augelli (1991) found that traditional academic indicators, such as high school performance, were weakly related to black students' performance and Pentages and Creedon (1978 in Suen, 1983) found that academic and psycho-social factors each accounted for half of the variance in predicting the attrition rates for black students. June *et al.* (1990), also found a consistent pattern of academic and psycho-social difficulties experienced by five groups of black students over a twelve year period.

The few South African studies report a similar pattern. Barnsley (1992) argues that psycho-social needs are as important as academic ones, requiring an approach that integrates both aspects. Lea (1987) also found that Psychology students attributed their academic difficulties more to non-cognitive factors like racial tension, lack of confidence and financial worries than they did to traditional academic factors. Agar (1992) also argues that black students' disadvantage is as affected by socio-political, psychological and economic factors as it is by educational matters, but that universities ignore these factors. While students considered their most severe problem affecting their performance to be financial worries, staff perceived that their most severe difficulty to be lack of appropriate study skills and language difficulties, and rated material and psychological factors as the least important issues affecting academic performance (Agar, 1992). Coleman (1993) found similar misunderstandings in his survey of the problems experienced by black students. While students considered factors like accommodation and financial difficulties, lack of support and low self esteem to play a central role in their academic difficulties, staff undervalued these factors and related failures solely to inadequate academic skills and language concerns.

These studies therefore highlight the need for multivariate studies exploring the interaction between cognitive and non-cognitive predictors of success, and the contextual factors that mediate their influence on adjustment to university and academic performance. These studies should be longitudinal, allowing one to identify both short and long-term effects on students' performance, as well as allowing for comparisons among different cohorts of students. It would be interesting for example, to compare the experiences of black students on historically white South African

campuses in the 1980's and early 1990's, with those of black students in the late 1990's by which time the racial composition of the student population had changed significantly.

More local research is also needed contrasting the experiences of white and black students on historically white and black campuses. Local research also needs to broaden its focus from cognitive difficulties to compare the effects of cognitive, psycho-social and socio-political factors.

At the level of intervention, attempts are needed to address black students' feelings of alienation, powerlessness and racial isolation. These should target all aspects of student life, beginning with the development of more appropriate selection criteria that acknowledge the impact of non-cognitive variables on black student success. Lengthy orientation programmes also need to be developed, to prepare students both academically and psycho-socially for university study. Black role models need to be fostered through such initiatives as student mentor programmes (Ntombela, Ogram, Zinner, Tshabalala and Majola, 1994) and affirmative action staff appointments. Interracial contact should also be encouraged, and the development of a shared social identity.

Academic development programmes also need to view development more holistically, including improvement of academic performance and reduction in feelings of alienation: "Effective support... has to address educational and socio-economic needs as well as the psychological needs of individual students" (Agar, 1992, p.100).

Lastly, more studies are needed subjecting current interventions to qualitative and quantitative evaluation, and comparing the efficacy of different interventions, in both the short and long term. South African academic development suffers from a lack of rigorous evaluation of this kind. The next issue to be discussed in the current study therefore, is to critically explore how successful South African universities have been in addressing the adjustment difficulties referred to above, under the auspices of academic support and academic development programmes.

CHAPTER FOUR: ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT:

South African tertiary institutions have addressed some of the difficulties described in the previous chapter, through programmes of academic support and development. Beginning in the 1980s, academic support programmes (ASP's) were isolated at a few English universities. By the mid 1990s, however, following a change in name and focus, most institutions had an Academic/ Education Development Programme (ADP/ EDP). The South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD) was also established to encourage liaison between different institutions.

4.1.   ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMMES:

Increasing numbers of black students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds gaining access to the English medium universities, coupled with the alarmingly high failure rate of these students, led the Universities of Natal, Rhodes, Cape Town and the Witwatersrand to establish academic support programmes in the 1980s. In most cases these consisted of central, co-ordinating units funded by donor grants and tutorial programmes at departmental level, run by junior staff, also on contract in externally funded positions (Anonymous, 1987).

Emphasis was firmly on first year student development, with the goal being "to prepare so-called disadvantaged students to adapt to the university's course structures and cope with their academic demands" (Khayile, 1987 in Bulman, 1996, p. 19). Terms like 'under-prepared' and 'disadvantaged' were used to describe black students, who were seen as needing remedial support to bridge the gap between poor secondary schooling and the requirements of university education.

The source of the difficulties was thus firmly located within the students themselves, with few attempts at institutional change. In a survey of staff attitudes towards ASPs at the Universities of Natal, Rhodes and the Witwatersrand, for example, staff recognised the need for universities to admit disadvantaged students but felt that their academic difficulties should be addressed through intensive tutorial schemes outside of academic departments, or pre-university bridging courses.

Only a fifth of respondents advocated changes in teaching styles or curricula (Agar, 1987b; Griesel, 1987; Tunmer, 1987).

Voluntary, small group tutorials were therefore offered, initially focussing on general academic skills training (Starfield and Hart, 1991b). Staff became aware, however, that students were not transferring what they had learnt in these courses to their mainstream disciplines. Focus shifted, therefore, to discipline-specific tutorial programmes, run by externally funded ASP tutors, located within departments, who had both discipline and educational expertise. These programmes sought to integrate students' understanding of discipline content, with the learning of academic skills, in an environment that emphasised discussion, thus also allowing for development of language skills.

It can thus be seen that ASPs emphasised students' cognitive development, but largely ignored their psycho-social difficulties. In an analysis of staff attitudes towards ASPs, for example, Agar (1987b) found that they placed considerable emphasis on addressing academic, linguistic and critical thinking skills. They did not, however, see a role for ASPs in addressing material and psychological concerns as these were viewed as the concern of student counselling centres.

At the level of academic debate, some reference was made to the role of non-cognitive factors in student developments. Agar (1987a) for example, advocated a more holistic approach to academic support that integrates traditional academic services, with student counselling, financial aid and other student services. A plenary session at the 1987 ASP conference also emphasised the interconnectedness of student problems, and identified as a central goal of ASP: "to create a positive psychological climate which will foster a success orientation by boosting the students' self confidence, self esteem and self image" ("Where are we going in ASP?", 1987, p.8). These theoretical discussions, however, rarely filtered down to the level of practical intervention, and ASPs continued with an exclusive focus on cognitive skills.

By the early 1990's the value of ASPs was being questioned, with criticisms raised from two sources. Staff at historically white institutions began to argue that increasing numbers of black

students meant that labour-intensive, tutorial-based ASPs were no longer cost-effective (Agar, 1992 and Moulder, 1991). Staff at historically black institutions also attacked the policy of pouring huge donor grants into programmes aimed at a minority of black students at privileged white universities, while they were highly under-resourced.

The tendency to locate the source of academic difficulties within the cognitive apparatus of individual students was also criticised as blaming the victim. This allowed academics to absolve themselves of responsibility for the problem, and ignore the need for change to their curricula:

> Academic support programmes have the effect of insulating their universities from the realities of black schooling and from the demands of black communities in general, and thus serve to inhibit the fundamental institutional change required to meet developing educational needs   (Hunter and Scott, 1990, p.137).

By focussing only on remedial student development, ASPs thus provided only short term, reactive solutions, to long term, far-reaching problems (Moulder, 1991). Relying on crumbs from already over-stretched university budgets, and dwindling private donations, ASPs were structurally fragile. Structured as separate units to which certain groups of students could be sent for remediation, they were also marginalised from mainstream academic activities.

By the early 1990's, therefore, critics began to advocate a shift from the peripheral approach of academic support, to a mainstream, transformatory approach, which would locate responsibility for academic support firmly within departments and curricula.

4.2.   ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES:

A shift thus occurred in the early 1990s from a deficit model of support for under-prepared students, to an approach emphasising academic development of all aspects of teaching and learning, including admissions policies, curriculum and materials development and teaching styles (Sanders and Seneque, 1992). Instead of being isolated in separate units, academic development now became faculty and departmentally based, due to a belief that student

difficulties could best be addressed from within departments, by the staff directly concerned with student learning.

Lazarus (1987) describes this shift as a change in role from academic development practitioners being missionaries to becoming agents of change. Where ASPs offered remediation to high risk students in separate support centres, ADPs focussed on high risk courses and worked within established faculty and departmental structures (Blunt, 1993). Academic development thus sought to transform all levels of the institution, as seen in the following definition:

> [Academic development is] the development of students' academic, personal and social skills. It encompasses the individual and collective professional development of academic staff. It means driving academic development as a research and practice-based discipline. Finally it demands the development of [the institution's] capacity to improve, thereby meeting the stated objectives of contributing to educational and social change
>
> (Walker and Badsha, 1993, p.62).

ADPs also established a new set of goals, namely transformation, Africanisation and mainstreaming (Bulman, 1996). I consider these goals to exist in a hierarchy, with transformation forming the overarching goal of all ADPs, while Africanisation represents the outcome to which change is directed, and mainstreaming the strategy for achieving transformation.

Widespread organisational transformation is a recurrent theme in the literature on academic development: "academic development is institutional change and capacity building as much as individual (whether student or lecturer) development" (Walker and Badsha, 1993, p.61). As a result of this change in direction, universities and technikons began to establish Transformation Forums to review all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Students were encouraged to contribute to these transformation processes. Their status at the bottom of the university hierarchy, however, (Gray, 1984), and feelings of disempowerment as described in the previous chapter, inhibited their participation.

As a result of the emphasis on transformation, a new view emerged of academic development practitioners adopting an advisory role, assisting departments and faculties in the development of curricula relevant to the local context. Systems theory offers a useful distinction between first order, or surface change, and second order, or deep, far-reaching changes in fundamental aspects of a system's structure and organisation (Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch, 1974). Academic development practitioners were urged to act as facilitators and catalysts of change at all levels of university practice, including student learning, staff development and organisation-wide development, and thus bring about second order changes:

> First order change (surface change/ reform) improves current practice without altering the basic organisational arrangements or changing the way lecturers and students perform their roles. Second order change (deep change/ transformation) challenges the way the institution is put together, its goals, structures and roles, including collaborative work cultures (Walker and Badsha,1993, p. 61).

While second order change remains a goal of academic development, however, it is, in many instances, a goal not yet realised, due to lack of institutional support (Boughey, 1994) or resistance by academics (Frielick, 1993).

The second goal of Africanisation is also in many cases not achieved. Despite calls for universities to develop new educational epistemology that more closely reflects our context (Frame, 1993 and Mandew, 1993), curricula, research programmes, and staff composition in many cases have not been adapted to the socio-political realities of South Africa.

Mainstreaming has been somewhat more successfully achieved due to the awareness that academic development is no longer sustainable as an ad hoc, separate activity. This has involved two steps. Firstly departments have been urged to take responsibility for academic development, often by locating an academic development practitioner, who is also a discipline specialist, in the department. Moves have also been made away from voluntary additions to the mainstream curriculum, to a focus on curriculum development: "A general trend of academic support programmes seems to be towards more faculty and departmental involvement and ownership,

with a shift away from voluntary, extra tuition programmes towards compulsory, credit-bearing, integrated courses" (Hofmeyr and Spence, 1989 in Carter, 1991, p. 35).

Analysis of the academic development initiatives at various institutions reveals wide disparity in the extent to which the above three goals have been realised, as well as diversity in terms of philosophy, structure, and even terminology used to describe core activities (Bulman, 1996). At the historically white Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, which enjoyed more and earlier funding than the historically black universities, ASPs date back to the early 1980s and mainstreaming of academic development became university-wide policy by the early 1990s (Carter, 1991). At Rhodes University, ADP tutors have been accommodated in departments, responsible for assisting staff in the development of discipline-specific academic skills modules, integrated into lecture courses (Carter, 1991). At the University of Natal academic development is widespread and located in departments, with a few functions such as research, evaluation and resource development centralised (Bulman, 1996). In the university's Vice Chancellor's Review and Planning Guidelines (University of Natal, 1994) the mainstreaming of academic development and transformation of all aspects of the teaching-learning process has become university policy.

At historically black universities, however, the picture is less impressive. The University of Zululand, for example, only began to receive funding for academic support in 1993. All ASP posts are of a short term, temporary nature, even at management level, and the focus is almost exclusively on student development, in the form of academic skills workshops, voluntary tutorials, and academic literacy courses. At the University of Durban Westville, the focus is on tutorial-based student development, although a new focus on curriculum development began to emerge by the mid-1990s. ADP staff were, however, aware of a large gap between their idealised notion of a long-term, mainstreaming approach and the difficulties of practice, including minimal endorsement and lack of interest by senior academics. At the M.L. Sultan and Natal Technikons, there is little departmental ownership of Academic Development, with ASPs offering voluntary, content-based tutorials and skills workshops, which have no impact on existing curricula (Bulman, 1996).

4.3. EXAMPLES OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS:

Despite commitment in the literature to mainstream transformation, an overview of academic support and development practices reveals a proliferation of programmes aimed at student development. Closer analysis of some of these initiatives reveals the extent to which the psycho-social issues referred to in the previous chapter, are being addressed in South African tertiary institutions, and will also allow for later comparison to my own intervention. As a comprehensive overview of all student development interventions is beyond the scope of this thesis, I have chosen to highlight four types of intervention which, I feel, reflect the variety of ASPs and ADPs. (For summary and comparison a table of the four initiatives will be presented in section 4.3.5).

4.3.1. Linguistic and academic skills courses:

A variety of credit- or non-credit bearing courses exist, aiming to improve linguistic competence and develop academic skills. Examples are the Learning, Language and Logic course at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (Inglis and Grayson, 1992), the English for Academic Purpose course at the University of Cape Town (Pandor, 1991), a Linguistic Skills Unit course in reading, writing and thinking skills at the University of Fort Hare (Grewar, 1987) and a general study skills course at the University of the Witwatersrand (Starfield and Hart, 1991a and b).

Detailed evaluation of the above courses, particularly in terms of quantitative impact on academic performance is lacking (a weakness common to most academic development initiatives). A survey of tutors and students attending the study skills course at the University of the Witwatersrand, however, reveals that students felt that the course had a beneficial impact on their mainstream disciplines. Tutors claimed, however, that less benefit was derived by students for whom English was a second language, than by mother-tongue speakers of English. This was partially due to the racial composition of the course and points to a debate in ADP work, namely whether to offer racially mixed courses or target only black students. While the latter approach reinforces the remedial stigma of academic skills courses and may be interpreted as racist, mixed

classes often lead white students to dominate discussions while black ones become passive and withdrawn, thus reinforcing stereotypes and heightening inter-group tensions (Starfield and Hart, 1991b).

A superficial evaluation of the English for Academic Purposes Commerce course at the University of Cape Town revealed that students fail to see the relevance of decontextualised academic skills courses to their mainstream studies. Consequently this course had little effect on adjusting the 60% failure rate of the Economics course it was attempting to service (Pandor, 1991).

This highlights a concern with academic skills courses, namely the failure by students to transfer skills to their mainstream disciplines. Instead of viewing academic skills as a set of processes to be mastered and applied to their disciplines, students view them as yet another set of isolated facts to be learnt and then discarded after the examination (Starfield and Hart, 1991b).

A second criticism of these courses is that they rest on the assumption that a focus on cognitive and metacognitive processes and skills is sufficient to overcome underpreparedness: "Basic assumptions underlying these attempts are that the development of cognitive and metacognitive skills should help learners, particularly less effective learners, become more successful, by expanding their repertoire of strategies and refining their knowledge of the learning process" (Starfield, 1987, p.119). Hence emphasis is placed on training learners in a set of academic skills and strategies, while ignoring their beliefs about their own learning, and other psycho-social factors as explored in the previous chapter. Without directly addressing deep-rooted experiences of powerlessness, passivity and isolation, however, it remains doubtful whether cognitive and linguistic skills can have more than a superficial impact on performance.

A third and important criticism applies to many academic development initiatives. Despite academic development's call for institutional transformation, skills courses target a very narrow level of intervention, namely student cognitive development, leaving the institution unchanged. These courses thus insulate departments and curricula from change processes and thus constitute

only first-order change. In addition, by ignoring students' experiences of powerlessness and alienation, no attempt is made to empower students to make a meaningful contribution to organisational transformation and thus their voice remains unheard in wider change processes.

It thus appears that academic skills courses have only superficial, short-term benefits. While some enthusiasm is expressed by students (Starfield and Hart, 1991b), limited evaluation data on these courses suggests minimal impact on academic performance (Pandor, 1991).

4.3.2. Tutorial programmes:

Following awareness of students' failure to transfer learning from decontextualised skills courses, many practitioners shifted their attention to departmental tutorial programmes. These are usually co-ordinated by academic development tutors and consist either of mainstream, compulsory tutorials for all students, or voluntary, additional ones for those students battling with the course.

Tisani (1988) provides a useful overview of black students' experiences of tutorials. Over half of the students surveyed had little idea at the beginning of the year what to expect from tutorials, and thus assumed they would be mini-lectures. Particular problems identified included lack of participation (only 18% of respondents claimed that their participation in discussions was good), inhibiting tutors and dislike of students who dominated discussion. A similar state of passivity and lack of participation in tutorials provided the impetus for the current study. A further survey of heads of departments revealed that tutors had low academic qualifications and were usually senior students. In most instances no formal training was provided for these tutors (Tisani, 1988).

Similar lack of confidence to participate and passive dependence on the tutor to re-teach the course was found in the evaluation of a Mathematics tutorial course at the University of the Witwatersrand (Lloyd, 1987). The tutorial format was thus shifted to include more co-operative learning, with tutorials divided into small groups of 3-5, who discussed a topic and reported back to the whole class. Student responsibility for solutions was overtly communicated, with the tutor

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acting merely as a mediator of discussion rather than a lecturer. (Both of these strategies were used in the design of the current intervention, as will be discussed later.) This approach was more successful, with evaluation showing that most students considered themselves to have grown in confidence, and claimed that the tutorials impacted positively on their learning, particularly due to the emphasis on co-operative learning. Concerns included frustration at students who dominated discussions and those who contributed little. Tutors emphasised the importance of group dynamics in determining the tutorial's success and the tensions between allowing enough time for discussion and keeping up with the pace of the lecture course (Lloyd, 1987).

With adequate tutor training and opportunities for discussion, tutorial programmes can have many benefits. These include the development of communication skills, greater mastery of the subject, enhanced motivation, and improved social relations (Coleman, 1993 in Spencer, 1994). By forcing students to take responsibility for guiding the discussion process, active and autonomous learning skills are also developed (an issue that will also inform the current intervention design) (Tisani, 1988). The social nature of collaborative discussions thus indirectly addresses the social isolation referred to in the previous chapter (Tinto, 1989, in University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992).

With poor co-ordination and training, however, tutorials are reduced to little more than mini-lectures. They are often relegated to a junior member of staff to co-ordinate, who lacks the resources and experience to administer them well (Mabizela, 1994). Rarely examinable, and often of a voluntary nature, they are also perceived by students as peripheral and unimportant (Agar, 1990). Evidence also suggests that attendance rarely impacts on students' academic performance (Maxwell, 1990 in University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992).

For black students, most of whom have unclear expectations of tutorials, they can be particularly threatening: "They are strangers to the language, culture and colour that pervades the tutorial setting" (Tisani, 1988, p.217). Their school experience is of huge, teacher-centred classes, with few opportunities for discussion: "This has created a culture of silence turning our children into

non-participants in the process that should be aimed at developing them" (Mabe, 1988 in Tisani, 1988, p.215).

The compulsory tutorial situation is thus a microcosm of the political and cultural forces dominating wider society. Black students are thrust together with peers with whom they have had little prior contact, who may be more articulate, and may have had more exposure to discussion, thus highlighting their disadvantages. In addition they feel inhibited by tutors, and so respond with mistrust, passivity and silence. As a result of their own inexperience and lack of training, tutors often seem insensitive to the cultural and political forces dominating the group. They allow white students to dominate discussion, thus reinforcing both groups' stereotypes of one another.

This leads to a second weakness, namely the inadequate training of tutors, particularly in sensitivity to the needs of black students (Dammarell, 1988 and Tisani, 1988). Tutor training is usually limited to a few ad hoc consultations with staff regarding the content of the tutorial and little or no training in the running of discussion groups.

Many tutors also experience uncertainty regarding their role within the tutorial group (Ruth, 1993). While they recognise the value of facilitation, they are often pressured to adopt a lecturing role by both staff and students. Staff often expect them to deliver new material to supplement lectures, while students demand that they re-teach course content (Ruth, 1993). Hence the tutor is forced into a position of authority, allowing students to slip further into a state of passivity:

> I don't like that power when people defer to me as the educator; they are all waiting to hear what I think. And I wish they wouldn't because I don't think that what I think is more important than what they think, but they think it is   (tutor in Ruth, 1993, p. 406).

> The tutor is seen as always right, has all the answers   (tutor in Ruth, 1993, p. 408).

From the above it can be seen that tutorial initiatives such as these largely ignore issues of transformation, both in terms of the curriculum and in terms of power imbalances between staff and students. Instead of attempting to neutralise power imbalances, tutorials entrench these,

forcing the tutor into the role of expert and reinforcing black students' sense of inferiority and weaker communication skills compared to their more articulate peers.

To summarise, tutorials may impact on students' enjoyment of a course if collaborative learning is encouraged, and may lead to the development of autonomous learning if responsibility for the tutorial is devolved to the students. In many instances, however, cultural and political relations are inappropriately managed, with black students inhibited by their peers and tutor and so retreating into a state of passivity and silence. Inadequate training leaves inexperienced tutors ill prepared to handle this situation and thus they allow white students to dominate proceedings, and adopt the role of expert rather than facilitator of discussion. This heightens power imbalances between tutor and white and black students, and reinforces black students' state of alienation and powerlessness.

4.3.3. Supplemental Instruction:

Supplemental Instruction (S.I.) was devised in 1974 at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, in response to first year student attrition statistics of 50% (National Center, 1990 in University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992). S.I. has now been implemented at over 180 tertiary institutions in America, and by the mid 1990's, had spread to other countries, including South Africa.

S.I. seeks to improve pass and graduation rates, and decrease failure and attrition rates (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992), by targeting high risk courses (a strategy that separates S.I. from the ADP tutorials referred to in the previous section, which target high risk students). High risk courses are defined as those with failure and withdrawal rates of 30% or more. They usually also have large classes, taught primarily through lecture mode and are often gatekeeper courses like Mathematics I, that serve as prerequisites to other courses.

S.I. involves voluntary, small group discussions, held twice or more a week, running parallel to the lecture course. Academic skills are integrated with revision of difficult areas of course content. S.I. sessions are led by a senior student who adopts a facilitative role, keeping the group

focussed on the task at hand and modelling effective study behaviour for the group, rather than acting as an authority figure re-teaching the course. Group leaders attend a 12 hour training course, as well as weekly supervision sessions (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992).

Unlike the previous two strategies, a central feature of S.I. as implemented in the USA, is rigorous evaluation of student performance. Analysis of student performance at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, between 1983 and 1991, revealed that S.I. raised pass rates by 10%, across various courses at undergraduate and post-graduate level. S.I. participants also earned significantly higher numbers of A and B symbols, significantly lower rates of D and F symbols, significantly lower withdrawals from the course and significantly higher final course marks, than students who did not attend S.I. (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992). They also graduate at approximately a 12% higher rate than non-participants (Schroen, Fuzile and Mthembu, 1994). These results are not unique to the University of Missouri, Kansas City, but have been replicated at 100 colleges and universities across America (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992). Constant results are also found even controlling for motivational differences and prior academic achievement. Studies also suggest that S.I. has benefit to students across a range of academic abilities and from varied ethnic backgrounds (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992).

S.I. has been implemented on local campuses including the University of the Orange Free State (Bitzer, 1994), the Rhodes University Law School (Davies and Vorster, 1994) and the Economics Department at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (Schroen *et al.*, 1994). Evaluation has not been as rigorous as in America, although preliminary results at Rhodes suggested a positive impact on the 46% high failure rate in Law I (Davies and Vorster, 1994). At the University of the Orange Free State, positive responses were gained from staff and students to a pilot project, and preliminary results suggest an improvement in performance (Bitzer, 1994).

Evaluation of the Economics Department S.I. programme at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg revealed an average final mark among S.I. participants of 9.1% higher than that of non-participants. This is comparable to the University of Missouri, Kansas City finding that attendance at S.I. raises final marks by approximately 10%. Findings for black students,

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however, were far less encouraging. For these students, the pass-rate of S.I. participants was actually less than that of non-participants (44.8% compared to 45.4% in the first semester and 35.3% compared to 39.1% in the second semester) (Schroen *et al.*, 1994).

Several explanations for the poor performance of black participants are offered (Schroen *et al.*, 1994). Firstly, they may have become complacent as a result of attending S.I. and thus reduced their independent studying leading to poor performance. They may have committed themselves to too many academic development initiatives, and become overloaded. Alternatively they may have expected re-teaching of course content in S.I. sessions. When this expectation was not met, they may have given up in despair, stopped attending, and slipped into a state of learned helplessness, thus failing the course. Perhaps their peers, however, became more motivated to attend due to the difficulty of the course, worked harder and thus improved their performance.

S.I. has a number of benefits. In contrast to academic skills courses, it teaches critical thinking and subject specific academic skills from within the discipline rather than in a decontextualised manner. This overcomes the problem of transfer of learning to mainstream courses. S.I. also targets high-risk courses rather than high-risk students, thus reducing the remedial stigma of attending S.I. Because the course itself is targeted, S.I. is also proactive and is offered from the beginning of the semester, rather than waiting for students to fail before attending.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of S.I. in terms of the issues central to this thesis, is that students are empowered to assume responsibility for the class, and the leader is limited to a facilitative rather than an authoritarian role. Hence a new culture of learning is encouraged that breaks down the passive, teacher-oriented learning mode students are more familiar with. Unequal power relations between tutor and students are neutralised as the leader presents him/herself to the group merely as a successful student rather than a discipline authority:

> The distinguishing feature of Supplemental Instruction over other small group learning techniques, such as tutorials, seems to be that it takes cogniscence of the power-knowledge relationships and presents the Supplemental Instruction leader as a role model as opposed to a discipline expert
>
> (Spencer, 1994, p.535).

By empowering students to take responsibility for their learning and by allowing them to talk through the discipline and its associated difficulties, the discipline is demystified: "It thus becomes owned by the students and is no longer seen and experienced as the exclusive preserve of the subject specialist" (Davies and Vorster, 1994, p. 167).

While S.I. makes a useful contribution to the transformation of staff-student relations, it has little effect on the transformation of curricula, with failure rates returning to unacceptable levels if S.I. is terminated. It is thus rejected by some academics as a limited solution given the large numbers of underprepared students in some courses, as well as the excessively high failure rates.

Spencer (1994) argues, however, that S.I. could play a crucial role in the process of curriculum development, due to the levelling of power relations in the S.I. group. Given students' relative lack of power in the university hierarchy, it is difficult to ensure that their views are represented in the curriculum. In the S.I. group, however, students are likely to feel comfortable communicating their opinions to the leader, who can in turn, pass them on to the department, ensuring that the student voice is heard. Spencer therefore advocates that S.I. leaders be chosen, not only for their ability to model effective study habits, but also for their ability to accurately represent student opinions about the course. All opinions regarding the course should be actively encouraged in S.I. sessions and fed into a curriculum development process, through the S.I. leader (Spencer, 1994).

Particular problems have been identified applying the S.I. model in the South African context due to accommodating students of diverse backgrounds and abilities in the same group. As in other tutorial situations, past mistrust often leads groups to become polarised along racial lines, with black students becoming withdrawn and white students dominating discussions, an issue requiring specialised training on the part of S.I. leaders.

The passive educational background of many students can also pose problems. In the United States of America, high school pupils have more opportunities for discussion than is true for many South African students, to whom the tutorial situation is unfamiliar. Many students

attending S.I. in South Africa also have high expectations of being re-taught the syllabus (Schroen *et al.*, 1994), hence placing pressure on the leader to assume authority in the group.

Group size is also a problem in South Africa. Due to large numbers of underprepared students, groups are often much bigger than the American norm of ten, making it almost impossible to practice collaborative learning or to allow students to take control of the direction of the group.

Perhaps the greatest concern facing local implementations of S.I. is the finding that it seems effective, but not for the group targeted, as illustrated in the economics programme described above (Schroen *et al.*, 1994). The originators of S.I. acknowledge that it is able to help students who are 'slightly' under-prepared, but can do little for those unable to read and write at high school level (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992). In America the seriously disadvantaged constitute a small minority, often written off as dropout figures, but in South Africa, huge numbers of these students are academic development's main target group.

Despite these difficulties S.I. is one of few interventions in this country to directly address power imbalances between tutor and students and in so doing empowers students to take control of their learning. It thus has much in common with the current intervention. Combined with the curriculum development focus proposed by Spencer (1994) and interventions targeting other components of the university system it has great potential as a solution to the problems of disadvantage.

4.3.4. <u>Bridging programmes:</u>

4.3.4.1.   The Science Foundation Programme, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg:

The Science Foundation Programme (S.F.P.) was introduced at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, in 1991 as a year long foundational and alternative access course to the BSc degree, for disadvantaged black students. Students who do not gain sufficient matric points for entry into a BSc degree, but demonstrate academic potential, are selected into the programme.

Emphasis is placed on overcoming the huge gap between schooling and university, and providing students with the skills, resources and confidence to succeed in a BSc degree (Grayson, 1994).

The S.F.P. is relevant to the current study as it is one of few interventions to acknowledge the role of psycho-social as well as cognitive factors in academic performance (Barnsley, 1992). The commitment to a holistic approach to teaching is demonstrated in a curriculum which firmly entwines academic skills and discipline content. Academic skills are identified by staff in advance of the course, and then explicitly to students (Grayson, 1994). In addition, opportunities for students to transfer skills from one discipline to another are explicitly developed, so that the same skill might be applied in a number of contexts (Grayson, 1994). In this way, students' course load is viewed not as a set of discrete courses, but rather a holistic, integrated curriculum.

S.F.P.'s commitment to psycho-social development is seen in the integration of a counselling component into the course, consisting of vocational counselling, workshops on such areas as conflict management, assertiveness training, and time management, and a community project. In addition individual and group counselling sessions are provided (Barnsley, 1992).

Particular psycho-social issues considered to play a key role in academic performance are loss of control, low self efficacy regarding academic ability and lack of confidence to approach staff. To address students' loss of control and allow for the development of a sense of mastery and confidence over their studies, courses begin with content and experiences that are familiar to students. Students are also taught to monitor and evaluate their own performance, and many opportunities are provided for assessment and monitoring of progress, thus encouraging active, autonomous learning skills (Grayson, 1994).

To overcome negative thought patterns and low expectations of academic success the S.F.P. makes use of Rational Emotive Therapy (Tobias, 1985 in Barnsley, 1992) which focusses on replacing a set of negative self-statements with positive ones. Positive statements are then reinforced through course experiences which allow for mastery and success.

To improve students' sense of confidence, the instructional approach emphasises experiential, participative learning with frequent opportunities for group work, rather than lecture modes of delivery. Students are also encouraged to form study groups. In addition, the S.F.P. counsellor acts as a mentor to students, allowing for rehearsal of appropriate behaviour when approaching staff (Barnsley, 1992). All of the above components are empowering and thus informed the design of the intervention for this thesis.

There are several benefits to the S.F.P. compared to other academic development initiatives. Unlike the interventions described above, this programme involves transformation at multiple levels, including student, staff and curriculum development, rather than limiting intervention to one component of the system. By explicitly providing opportunities for control of learning, the programme also overcomes feelings of learned helplessness and thus serves to empower students.

It is also one of the few local interventions to explicitly acknowledge the impact of psychosocial factors on academic performance, and use psychological theories to inform curriculum development. Interviews with S.F.P. students highlights the positive impact of this holistic approach to student development:

> It gives a black student enough, fruitful and good exposure to a university in academic and social aspects of life. The outcome of this becomes the gaining of confidence, provision of sound academic direction, provision of knowing yourself and creation of hope for a degree.

> There are many things one has learnt from this course. It did not only develop us academically but it also matured us as individuals.
>
> (S.F.P. students in Grayson, 1994, p. 383).

Much can be learnt from the S.F.P. of relevance to the current intervention. Of particular value to the current study are the provision of opportunities for control and self monitoring of performance, the benefits of nurturing staff-student relations and most importantly the value of a holistic approach to student development.

4.3.5. Summary and comparison of above four interventions:

Table 4.1.   Summary and comparison of four student development interventions

	STUDY SKILLS COURSES:	TUTORIAL PROGRAMMES:	SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION:	BRIDGING COURSES - SCIENCE FOUNDATION PROGRAMME
DEFINITION:	Generalised, credit or non-credit bearing courses outside mainstream departments	Discipline-specific, voluntary or compulsory tutorials within mainstream departments	Voluntary, small group discussions targeting high-risk courses, integrating skills and content	Year-long bridging programme for disadvantaged science matriculants, to gain entry into the BSc
FOCUS:	Linguistic, cognitive and meta-cognitive processes and skills	Course revision and academic skills	Course revision and discipline-specific academic skills	Integrated programme - student, staff and curriculum development
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT STUDENT DEVELOPMENT:	Linguistic, cognitive and meta-cognitive development ensures academic success	Cognitive skills emphasised - psycho-social needs indirectly met by tutorial format	Student development requires students to take responsibility for learning	Holistic - success depends on psycho-social factors (especially control, self-efficacy & confidence) as well as cognitive ones
CONTRIBUTION TO ISSUES OF POWER & TRANSFORMATION:	Ignores power imbalances between tutor and group Insulates departments from real change	Heightens power imbalances and black students' feeling of inferiority No real change	Neutralises power imbalances between tutor and group Little contribution to curriculum change	Opportunities for mastery and control of learning Curriculum development based on sound psychological principles
EVALUATION FINDINGS:	Ad hoc evaluation	Ad hoc evaluation	Rigorous evaluation - 10% higher pass rate for participants	Most gain entry into BSc Students value holistic approach
CRITIQUE:	No transfer of learning to mainstream Ignores psych-social concerns	Intergroup tension Black students passive/ mistrustful Poor tutor training	Rigorous evaluation Empowering process No curriculum changes Locally of little benefit to black students	Transformation at multiple levels Acknowledges role of psycho-social factors in student development

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4.4. ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES – CRITIQUE:

The above varied approaches to academic development highlights a key problem with work in this area, namely a lack of coherence within the field and a "bewildering variety of forms" (Hofmeyr and Spence,1989 in Blunt, 1993, p. 86). Lack of agreement exists regarding the objectives and methods of academic development, and a more coherent set of activities, clearly defined research goals and a solid theoretical foundation is needed (Blunt, 1993; Moll, 1987 and Scott, 1994). Terms like "disadvantaged" and "under-prepared"are frequently used as a set of liberal sentiments, for example, with little theoretical debate concerning their meaning. Hence Academic Development falls into the trap of offering superficial, reactive solutions to the problems of poor performance and high attrition, without grounding these in solid educational theory and debate.

A central weakness, that the current study seeks to address, is the scarcity of evaluation research in academic development. Few conclusions regarding the efficacy of interventions can be drawn, because, apart from a few exceptions, evaluation is either non-existent, or confined to qualitative comments from a tiny sample of students (Mhlane, 1991). Research is needed into such issues as the impact of academic development on student performance, evaluation of the instructional methods used and characteristics common to participators in ADPs (Muhlopo, 1992).

A problem common to most academic development interventions is that, despite an idealised view of academic development, among practitioners, as curriculum focussed and mainstreamed, the reality is somewhat different. In many cases academic development is still tutorial based, supplementary to lectures, and aimed at providing black students with the academic and linguistic skills believed to be lacking as a result of their education, with any attempts at integration resisted:

> From the survey conducted for this study it would appear that the call for the integration of academic development had met with little success. In fact many respondents reported resistance to their efforts to get any kind of 'ownership' of the extra tutorial programmes

from many academic departments, let alone integration of these into the mainstream

courses   (Bulman, 1996, p. 112).

This resistance to integration may be due to several factors. Lack of commitment by university executives may filter down to apathy at departmental level. Alternatively academics may resist changes despite commitment at executive level, due to perceived threats to their academic autonomy and their most powerful resource, the curriculum. They may also fail to see the relevance of investing energy in academic development, due to the inadequate research referred to earlier. Unless easily available quantitative data, such as longitudinal changes in class demography, student academic entrance level, or course performance are made available to academic staff, they are unlikely to take seriously the need to mainstream academic development (Young, 1992).

The criticism perhaps most relevant to this thesis is that most academic development interventions are somewhat reductionist, focussing on cognitive, meta-cognitive and linguistic development, at the expense of emotional and social development. As the discussion of the Science Foundation Programme illustrated and as discussed in the previous chapter, academic performance is equally dependent on a set of non-cognitive, psycho-social factors. Before attempts to develop adequate cognitive skills can prove successful, therefore, it is essential to directly address these issues.

Psycho-social factors which have a particular impact on academic performance are students' experiences of powerlessness and alienation at the bottom of the university hierarchy (Suen, 1983). Academic development's focus on mainstreaming and wider processes of transformation thus omits a crucial step, namely the empowerment of students to take control of their learning and contribute as rightful participants in processes of change. Hence the central premise of this thesis is that students' engagement with the curriculum and participation in its transformation depends firstly on addressing the experiences of powerlessness described in the previous chapter.

Annecke *et al.* (1994) and Masenya (1994) also criticise academic development for its silence regarding the power imbalances between educators and learners and between groups in the broader South African society. According to Masenya (1994) current Academic Development discourse contains racist overtones, by focussing solely on the academic deficits of under-prepared students and trying to assimilate these students into an unchanged university, while ignoring questions related to the issue of under-preparedness as a broader social phenomenon. Academic development therefore needs to go beyond its superficial goal of addressing cognitive deficits and improving academic achievement, to challenge the ways in which universities and other social institutions contribute to students' under-preparedness:

> Academic development programmes have come to be conceptualised as being synonymous with the 'under-preparedness' of black students rather than with the under-preparing socio-educational realities in our society which, to a very large extent, are indicative of power relations between the subordinate and dominant groups (Masenya, 1994, p. 197).

I agree with Masenya's claim that academic development appears somewhat silent about the role played by the university power hierarchy in student development. I further argue that the assumption that an exclusive focus on cognitive development, while ignoring issues of powerlessness and alienation, is sufficient to develop a sense of control and mastery of learning among students, is somewhat short-sighted. In this thesis, I therefore advocate a new approach to student development, one which equips students with the resources to take control of their own learning, and allows them to develop the skills to actively contribute as empowered participants within the university system. I further suggest that the Theory of Empowerment provides both a theoretical base and practical applications of how this can be realised.

CHAPTER FIVE: EMPOWERMENT THEORY AND
PRACTICE:

5.1.   COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY - VALUES, GOALS AND THEORETICAL
FOUNDATIONS:

With its emphasis on enhancing existing competencies rather than correcting deficits, its aim of overcoming feelings of helplessness, and its rejection of universally applicable solutions in favour of locally developed ones, empowerment theory has much to offer student development.

The notion of empowerment is a central concept of the discipline of community psychology, with some theorists viewing it as synonymous with the discipline (Rappaport, 1987 and Zimmerman, 1995). To fully understand empowerment theory, it is therefore necessary to first explore the context in which the theory developed (in line with an ecological focus on the importance of context on development of phenomena).

5.1.1. Historical development and theoretical foundation:

Community psychology formally dates from the Swampscott National Conference in Boston in 1965, and the creation of an American Psychology Association division of community psychology later the same year. Factors contributing to the development of the discipline included various responses to social inequity in the 1960's, such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement and the worker protests. As these groups demanded more equitable distribution of resources and became active participants in the struggle for better social conditions, their self and group concept and feelings of control improved, thus forming the basis for the theory of empowerment (Rappaport, 1977 and Thomas, 1984).

The debate concerning the role of values in scientific enterprise also influenced the development of community psychology. Until the 1960s, science and psychology had been seen as objective, value-free endeavours. Authors began to argue, however, that this attempt at neutrality was, in itself, a political, value-loaded position (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger and Wandersman, 1984 and Rappaport, 1984a) and that complete objectivity in science was

neither desirable nor possible. By maintaining a position of silence and distancing themselves from the political conflicts of the apartheid era, for example, South African psychologists had shown implicit support for the status quo (Dawes, 1986 and Lazarus, 1988). Community psychology therefore adopted the position that all science is value laden and sought to make the values on which its research and practice were based, explicit.

Community psychology was also influenced by developments in psychology, including disenchantment with the mainstream disease model of illness and the restriction of mental health services to young, white, wealthy populations, treated almost exclusively through individual therapy. Calls for a representative approach, acknowledging the role of economic and socio-political forces in the development of illness, led to new interests in community mental health and the training of psychologists in community based therapeutic techniques.

The emerging discipline of community psychology turned to several fields of psychology for theoretical inspiration, including Environmental and Organisational Psychology and Systems Theory, with particular emphasis on the relations between the component of a system, the system as a whole, and other surrounding systems (Rappaport, 1977). Systems Theory also contributed the notion of equifinality, or assumption of multiple causality of phenomena, and the importance of feedback in influencing the future direction of a system (Rappaport, 1977). Although Systems Theory impacted heavily on community psychology's theoretical foundation, it lacked the specificity necessary for designing community interventions. The theory of Social Ecology with its emphasis on the interaction between individuals and their physical, social and psychological environment thus played a crucial role in applying the principles of Systems Theory directly to social interventions. The ecological principles guiding community-based interventions will be outlined in more detail in section 5.2.5.

5.1.2. **Values and ethical principles of Community Psychology:**

In line with community psychology's commitment to explicate the values on which its research and practice is based, five core values of community psychology are articulated (Rappaport, 1977 and Thomas,1984). Firstly the value of prevention seeks to develop social and welfare institutions so they are better able to develop the well-being of communities and prevent social problems before they occur. Secondly is the value of empowerment, which

represents both the core theory of the discipline and the goal of its practice (Rappaport, 1987). The third value is the adoption of an ecological view, emphasising the interdependence of people and their environments. Fourthly community psychology advocates cultural relativity and the promotion of cultural diversity. Implicit in this value is a rejection of the dominant American position of liberalism which advocates the superiority of white, middle class values and seeks to distribute resources according to a single standard of normality and competence.

5.1.3. A world view advocating competence not deficit:

While all of the above values informed the current intervention, the fifth value is perhaps most relevant to this study, namely the promotion of competence rather than the correction of deficit. It demands in-depth analysis as it highlights the difference between an academic development approach to student development, compared to an empowerment philosophy.

The labels applied to people are highly communicative and evaluative, indicating to the subject acceptance of his/her behaviour as compatible with prevailing norms, or rejection thereof as deviating from normality (Rappaport and Cleary, 1980). Labels often evoke a self-fulfilling prophecy, eliciting behaviours consistent with the label, as illustrated by well-known studies such as Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Study (1973 in Zimbardo, McDermott, Jansz and Metaal, 1995), and Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) Pygmalion Effect study.

It is thus clear that labels like 'under-prepared' or 'disadvantaged' have long lasting effects, both on the person labelled, and influencing others' behaviour towards him/her. The tendency to label minority groups as having deficits dominates traditional helper-helpee relationships (Albee, 1980; Rappaport and Cleary, 1980 and Ryan, 1971).This view rests on the assumption that a poor community is a disorganised one, with this disorganisation manifesting itself as various forms of deficit (Cole and Bruner, 1971). It is the goal of the helping professions to adjust deprived groups to a previously determined standard of normality. Applied to this thesis, black students are labelled as disadvantaged and lacking the skills seen as crucial to

university success. The goal of academic development has therefore been to provide these skills, bringing students to the level of the pre-determined standard and thus fixing the deficit.

The deficit position is clearly a political one, entrenching differences between social groups (Cole and Bruner, 1971). Minority groups are labelled as deprived, and then blamed for their own deficits. Instead of targeting power imbalances or socio-economic inequities, deviation is seen as resulting from such factors as character traits, socialisation, or cultural deprivation, and corrected through such efforts as education, skills training or cultural upliftment (Ryan, 1971).

According to Cole and Bruner (1971), however, displays of apparent deficit are often merely the result of being made to perform in a foreign setting, inconsistent with past experiences. In experimental situations, for example, minority groups are disadvantaged by a situation that favours middle-class behaviour and experiences and thus asserts the power of the dominant social class: "the great power of the middle class has rendered differences into deficits because middle-class behaviour is the yardstick of success" (Cole and Bruner, 1971, p. 874).

Community psychology therefore rejects a deficit view and instead, identifies ways of addressing differences in society without labelling these as deficits. Community resources are strengthened and members are assisted to transfer skills from existing areas of competence to new contexts. By empowering communities to take control of their lives and thus correcting power imbalances, this approach meets the criteria for second order change discussed in the previous chapter (Wazlawick *et al.*,1974). An intervention that seeks to remedy deficits, however, focusses on helping disadvantaged groups adapt to an unchanged system, and thus brings about only first order, surface change, in one aspect of the system.

Applying this view to student development, an empowering education is one that shifts from a focus solely on correcting academic deficits to place equal importance on boosting existing competencies relevant to the task at hand. In the needs assessment of the current intervention, therefore, not only were areas of need identified, but also areas of existing strength, such as motivation and enthusiasm for the discipline, which could boost students' performance.

5.2. EMPOWERMENT THEORY AS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY'S WORLD VIEW AND PHENOMENON OF INTEREST:

Developing out of the above context is the theory of empowerment. The construct came to prominence in an address by the president of the American Psychological Association community psychology division in 1981, as an alternative mental health ideology to that of prevention of illness (Rappaport, 1984a). By the early 1990s it had become a "buzzword" in education, commerce and community development and a mainstream construct in several disciplines. While only 96 journal articles in the PsycLit abstracts used the word 'empower' in the title or abstract between 1974 and 1986, this number rose to 686 journal articles, between 1987 and 1993. In the Sociology Sociofile abstracts, 861 empowerment articles were written between 1974 and 1994, and in ERIC (abstracts for Educational research) 2261 articles on empowerment were written between 1982 and 1994 (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995).

5.2.1. Empowerment as a synthesis of needs- and rights-based approaches to service provision:

Empowerment theory grew out of two contrasting approaches to service provision, namely a needs-based or prevention approach and a rights-based or advocacy approach (Rappaport, 1981). The Community Mental Health Model of practice adopts a needs-based approach, making psychological resources available to as broad a community as possible, and taking as its goal prevention of mental illness. High risk populations are targeted, where deficits have been identified. The role of the psychologist is then to act as expert, providing professional services to client groups who are dependent on them. Such a model is the dominant model of practice in South African community psychology (Seedat, Cloete and Shochet, 1988). Academic development, as described in the previous chapter, meets the criteria for such a needs model.

The Social Action Model of practice, on the other hand, adopts a rights-based approach, which sees individuals as entitled to certain basic rights, with social problems resulting when these rights are not satisfied, leading to a sense of powerlessness and loss of control (Knitzer, 1980). Target groups are therefore powerless communities, and the role of the psychologist is to

ensure "the rights of all people to obtain the material, educational and psychological resources available in their society" (Rappaport, 1977, p.2).

According to Rappaport (1981), both approaches provide one-sided solutions to community problems. The needs-based approach is a top-down, paternalistic view of the professional as an expert and the community as children, dependent on him/her to provide for their needs (Rappaport, 1987). The unique resources present in a community are ignored and instead generalised solutions are imposed (Gesten and Jason, 1987). The rights-based approach is equally limited, with Rappaport (1981) arguing that targeting a community's rights without providing resources allows the state to ignore its responsibilities for service provision. By exaggerating the role of social and political systems in providing or withholding resources, the rights-based approach also neglects individual subjective experiences.

Rappaport therefore argues that multidimensional solutions are required to social problems, rather than a single, universally applicable solution (1984a). He thus proposes empowerment as synthesising the best elements of the above two models (Rappaport, 1981). This approach works from the bottom up to break down typical power relations and develop symmetrical relations between helper and helpee. Community members are viewed not simply as children in need, or as citizens with rights, but as full human beings with both rights and needs.

The above discussion can be applied to the current study. Most student development initiatives meet the characteristics of a needs-based approach. Black students' deficits are identified and programmes designed by academic development experts to meet these needs. Curriculum development, on the other hand, adopt a rights-based approach, advocating changes to curricula to reflect the realities of all student groups. Both approaches are equally limited. Targeting deficits within individual students provides a short-term solution and diverts attention away from change to the curriculum. Ensuring that students' rights are protected at curriculum level, however, leaves unchanged students' feelings of helplessness and powerlessness and thus is an equally limited approach. The most appropriate methodology is therefore an empowerment one, directly addressing students' cognitive and psycho-social needs and at the same time empowering them to participate in processes of change in a meaningful manner.

5.2.2. Empowerment Theory - definitions and debates:

The concept of empowerment is a complex one, abounding with paradox and apparent contradiction, due to its diverse manifestations in different contexts. This leads Rappaport to claim that "we do not know what empowerment is, but like obscenity, we know it when we see it" (1984b, p. 2) and to suggest that it is easier to define in its absence (Rappaport, 1985). Hence disempowerment manifests itself as a sense of alienation (Stokols, 1975 in Kieffer, 1984), self-blame (Ryan, 1971), and as a state of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975).

According to Rich, Edelstein, Hallman and Wandersman (1995), in their analysis of a community faced by a local environmental hazard, disempowerment involves loss of control and feelings of powerlessness. Relationships become strained and communities slip into a state of passive acceptance and learned helplessness. Such a state may either lead to depression and hopelessness, or empower the community to develop a common purpose and fight back.

The concept of empowerment is more difficult to define, due to its diverse manifestations. Kieffer, for example, adopts a psychological view of empowerment as "a long-term process of adult learning and development" (1984, p.10). During this the individual develops competence and the skills necessary for socio-political action. Speer and Hughey, on the other hand, adopt a wider, more political view of empowerment as "the ability for community organisations to reward and punish community targets, control what gets talked about in public debate, or shape how residents and public officials think about their community" (1995, p. 732).

Rappaport (1987) refers both to an empowered attitude and to active community participation in his definition, which is perhaps the most well-known operationalisation of empowerment:

> The concept suggests both individual determination over one's own life and democratic participation in the life of one's community... Empowerment conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights (1987, p. 121).

Zimmerman's approach (1990a and 1995) is multidimensional, and includes psychological, organisational and community aspects. Psychological empowerment refers to a perception of control, understanding of the socio-political environment and participatory behaviours, while organisational empowerment includes organisational structures and processes that develop skills such as leadership or networking and thus facilitate greater participation. Community empowerment refers to individuals uniting as a community to improve their collective lives, even when, as individuals, they may already consider themselves to be empowered.

Central to the above definitions is a concern both with an internalised attitude or perception of control, and actual democratic power, manifest through participatory behaviours. Both aspects distinguish empowerment from psychological constructs like locus of control or self efficacy on one hand, and from political terms like power or social control on the other. Thus what makes empowerment unique is the marriage of the personal and the political.

Hinted at in Kieffer's definition (1984) is a view of empowerment as a potential within all people, rather than a scarce commodity given by an expert. The assumption that empowerment is a product given by the powerful to the powerless is perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of the construct and limits it to a need that must be satisfied, as in the Community Mental Health Model. True empowerment cannot be given from without, but rather must be fostered within a community as skills and a sense of control are developed.

The above diversity of views leads to a common criticism of empowerment as conceptually ambiguous (Kieffer, 1984 and Mulvey, 1988). Rappaport (1984b) and Zimmerman (1995) argue, however, that as an ecologically sensitive construct empowerment manifests itself in different skills and competencies in various settings across time. While acknowledging the presence of generic components of empowerment, as in Rappaport (1987) and Zimmerman's (1995) definition, it may be inappropriate to develop a universal approach to empowerment. Rather emphasis should be placed on the ecological, context-specific nature of empowerment, operationalising the term within the context in which it is being studied.

5.2.3. **Empowerment Theory as the over-arching theory of Community Psychology:**

Lack of consensus regarding the definition of empowerment is mirrored by a lack of agreement at a theoretical level. There is no agreed upon theory of empowerment, but rather a number of models, which share certain characteristics. Some confusion also exists regarding the very nature of empowerment: "Among other things, empowerment has been referred to as a theory, a framework, a plan of action, a goal, an ideology and a process" (McWhirter, 1992, p. 222). Rappaport (1981) embraces such paradoxes as reflecting the contextual nature of empowerment although he does acknowledge that community psychology has been somewhat limited by its lack of a unifying theoretical framework.

According to Rappaport (1987), empowerment seeks to provide this theoretical framework. It gives the field a sense of direction, helps to explain the phenomena of practice and provides a context within which data can be understood. For Rappaport therefore, empowerment theory is community psychology, providing a world view and a sense of coherence to the discipline.

Drawing together the work of Rappaport (1981; 1985 and 1987), Zimmerman (1990 a and b; 1995) and others (Couto,1989; Kieffer, 1984 and Prilleltensky, 1991), the following concepts are common to most expositions of empowerment theory. These aspects should not be seen as a coherent theory of empowerment, but rather as guiding principles for empowerment both at the level of theory development and practical intervention.

In addition to endorsing the values of community psychology discussed in section 5.1.2., Prilleltensky (1991) argues that empowerment theory rests on three additional values, adherence to which defines an intervention as empowering. These values are self determination, or increased control over one's life, distributive justice, ensuring an equitable spread of resources, and collaborative participation of the community in all decision making processes. The three values impact on all empowerment processes, including both research and interventions. They helped to define the goals of the current intervention, namely to increase students experiences of control and mastery, to empower them to access the resources necessary to their academic success and to adopt a collaborative, participative methodology.

The above three values have, however, been criticised as potentially contradictory, as in the case of resources taken from one person or group to give to another, leading to a conflict between the values of self-determination and distributive justice. It is thus impossible that all three values co-exist as suggested by Prilleltensky (1991), as what is empowering to one group may be disempowering to another (Carroll, 1991).

A second aspect of empowerment theory is its conception of social systems as essentially paradoxical, consisting of multiple, interdependent levels, so that intervention at one level influences the other levels of the system. Hence empowerment theory adopts a systemic view, seeking not to control diversity, but celebrate it. Practitioners are urged to find answers in the diverse settings where people already cope with the problems of living and transfer skills to the problem at hand. Empowerment theory is also ecological, viewing the community as embedded in a dynamic context, resulting in ever shifting changes in the empowerment of the community.

The theory's concept of the individual is an optimistic one, emphasising every person's unique strengths and competencies. Instead of seeking to fix deficits, competencies are seen as already present, or possible given the correct opportunities. Empowerment is also defined as a process whereby people gain greater mastery over their lives (Rappaport, 1984b), with people desirous of such control and possessing the responsibility to cope with it.

A unique view of the professional is adopted, requiring the deconstruction of typical expert-client relations. Traditional paternalistic approaches, where skills and expertise are handed down from above (Swift, 1984) are rejected in favour of a view of the expert as facilitator and the community as collaborators in their own change processes. Conditions of participation impact on the empowerment of participants, with those who participate in decisions affecting them and assist in the design of locally developed solutions, more likely to be empowered than those for whom decisions or solutions are imposed from above.

A paradox exists here too, however, as community psychologists risk turning empowerment into a professional competence and developing expertise in the very area that aims to demystify expertise. To prevent this, professionals should, where possible, enter a community

only at their request (Couto, 1989) and adopt the role of mentor, ally, and observer, but not expert, providing emotional support as well as concrete skills (Kieffer, 1984).

Emphasis is placed on the importance of language as affecting how people think about themselves. According to Rappaport (1985), most helping professions create a culture of dependency on experts by relying on traditional medical terms like 'illness' and 'prevention'. He advocates empowerment as a new metaphor for the helping professions, seeing healing as self-generating and an expanding resource, rather than a scarce commodity given by experts.

Communities are thus viewed as responsible for their own development and as collaborators at all stages of an empowerment process, including evaluation. This is ideally longitudinal and ongoing, in order to reflect the dynamic nature of empowerment. For this reason, action research (Lazarus, 1985) is particularly suited to the evaluation of empowerment programmes.

The above constructs provide a useful theoretical base and informed the design of the current intervention, as will be outlined in chapter six, section 6.3.2.1. Empowerment theory has, however, been criticised as making vague abstractions rather than articulating how theory becomes concrete at the level of research and intervention. For details concerning specific aspects of practice it is necessary to turn to specific models of the empowerment process.

5.2.4. Models of empowerment:

While the above constructs guide all empowerment theorising, research and intervention, greater clarity is needed regarding the processes by which individuals, organisations and communities become empowered, as well as the outcomes of these processes. According to Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) empowering processes refer to the strategies and stages through which people gain greater control and so become empowered. Empowered outcomes are the consequences of these processes and must be measured at the level of individuals, organisations and communities. This distinction is useful in separating those aspects which form the focus for community intervention from the outcomes of such intervention, which form the basis for research and evaluation. A focus on processes and outcomes also helps to concretize empowerment to the level of application and intervention, instead of being limited

to vague abstraction and woolly theorising as is often criticised (Mulvey, 1988 and Newborough,1992a).

In the present study, empowering processes form the content of the empowerment tutorial programme and include the development of skills such as assertiveness, and opportunities for growth in aspects of the self such as confidence and self esteem. Empowered outcomes are the intended result of the intervention and hopefully include changes in academic performance as well as in attitudes towards studying. The development of an empowerment questionnaire also aimed to measure the outcome of an empowerment process, in terms of such aspects as self esteem, the student's perceived control over studies and an active learning strategy.

The five models of empowerment processes in this section differ according to the breadth of their focus. While an overview of all five will be offered to indicate the variety of approaches, greater attention will be given to those targeting an individual level of analysis, as the intervention on which this study is based targets the level of individual student empowerment.

5.2.4.1. Speer and Hughey (1995):

Speer and Hughey (1995) provide perhaps the broadest model, focussing on processes of empowerment at organisational level. Their analysis seeks to address the common criticism of empowerment theory as limited to an individual level of analysis and hence not fully articulating the relation between empowerment and the broader phenomenon of social power (Riger, 1993). According to Speer and Hughey (1995), empowerment is seen largely as occurring within individuals, while social power exists at the level of communities and organisations. Social power is exercised in three ways. Firstly it is demonstrated through access to resources which can be used to reward and punish and thus give an organisation power. Secondly, power resides in an organisation's ability to control the issues discussed in public debate by determining agendas and defining issues for discussion. Lastly, power is manifest in the ability to control myths, ideology and other information that determines how people think about their community. An organisation is thus believed to be empowered only when it is able to exercise these three instruments of power. This approach is clearly social in nature - individuals are perceived as unable to reward or punish, influence public debate or

control community ideology except through the organisations to which they belong and thus are thought not to exert social power except through organisational membership.

This model is one of few attempts to directly link the psychological construct of empowerment to the broader concept of social and institutional power. While Speer and Hughey recognise the importance of subjective states, they do not limit empowerment to intra-individual processes such as self-efficacy or perceived control but rather link empowerment directly to such processes as power, social transformation, and other community and organisational processes. Power is thus defined as occurring firstly within broad social, legal, economic and political systems, which then impact on individuals, leading to their empowerment. The model also proposes a dialectical relationship between individual empowerment and organisational expressions of power. Individuals become empowered, therefore, by participating in organisational processes and exercising power at an organisational level. In this way, psychological and broad community processes are brought together.

5.2.4.2. Rich, Edelstein, Hallman and Wandersman (1995):

Rich *et al.* (1995) also target an organisational level of analysis, focussing on the stages through which organisations pass on their way to empowerment. Their model is based on an assessment of a community's response to the presence of local environmental hazards, leading to the distinction between pro-active or planned empowerment, when a community initiates a choice of empowerment activities, and reactive or defensive empowerment in response to an external threat, as in the case of an environmental toxin. A student's decision to attend a development programme following failure on a test would also constitute reactive empowerment.

Rich *et al.* (1995) propose that organisations proceed to empowerment through a series of stages, to be outlined below, each of which may result either in empowerment or disempowerment. Empowerment is not, however, conceived of as a simple linear process, since the authors suggest that there are many complex paths to empowerment. Thus, contextual factors at individual, community and formal level combine to create a high or low capacity for participation in decision making. If a low capacity for involvement exists, there will be low citizen mobilisation, the problem will be unresolved and the community will be

disempowered. On the other hand, if there is a high potential for involvement, then formal empowerment, the first of four stages of empowerment, occurs. This occurs when formal institutions provide structures to allow communities to influence decision making. On its own, however, formal empowerment is insufficient to lead to full community empowerment, as the community may not be mobilised to make use of these structures, or they may distract attention away from real change, resulting in disempowerment. Thus, for example, the establishment by universities of a transformation forum in which students are encouraged to participate does not necessarily result in their empowerment, as they may lack the confidence to participate or may consider their participation to be a form of tokenism and so reject the validity of these structures.

If formal empowerment is found to result in a high level of community participation, however, then the second form of empowerment occurs, namely intrapersonal empowerment. This involves subjective feelings of competence and a sense of control over the environment. At this stage, individuals may perceive themselves as having limited control over a problem, and thus it remains unresolved. On the other hand, they may perceive themselves as able to influence the outcome of the situation, thus leading to the third stage of empowerment, namely instrumental empowerment. This refers to people's capacity to participate in and effect change at a community level. It results from the interaction between formal opportunities for participation, intrapersonal skills and competence. Instrumental empowerment finally leads to resolution of the problem, and thus substantive empowerment as the community is able to reach decisions that produce a desired set of outcomes. In the present study, therefore, it is hoped that students will be motivated to participate in the empowerment programme (formal empowerment), leading to a greater sense of control over their studies (intra-personal empowerment) which then motivates them to participate in wider processes of change (instrumental empowerment).

Like the Speer and Hughey (1995) model this one creates links between formal, organisation- and community-wide processes of empowerment, and those occurring within individuals. While Speer and Hughey see individual empowerment as an outcome of organisational power, however, Rich *et al.* argue that individuals become empowered (intra-personal empowerment) leading to organisational empowerment (instrumental empowerment). By acknowledging the interaction between four forms of empowerment, Rich *et al.* also consider empowerment to be

a process of development, which may be achieved to a greater or lesser degree in different contexts, rather than adopting a unidimensional approach of empowerment as a finite state similar across all contexts. The emphasis on the developmental aspects of empowerment has much in common with the approach of Kieffer (1986) to be discussed later in this section.

5.2.4.3.   Couto (1989):

Couto (1989) also adopts a stage approach in his analysis of the 1966 disaster when a coal tip outside the village of Aberfan in Wales rolled into the valley, killing 104 children and 40 adults. He argues that the community passed through two stages to empowerment. Firstly they experienced a pre-political stage, when individuals and families became aware of their common loss and thus drew together as a community. The community then realised the need to move beyond the experiences of their community, to bring about broader societal change and so moved into the political stage. Their experiences were related to those of other communities, and they began to lobby for the removal of coal tips throughout Britain. Existing competencies within the community were identified to address their concerns, and the community gained confidence in their ability to advocate for themselves, rather than relying on expert help. Their political sophistication grew as they related the tragedy to its root political and economic causes and also became aware of the limitations of their power, recognising, for example, the need for financial resources to lobby for the removal of waste tips.

Similarities can be seen to Rappaport's (1987) definition of empowerment as involving both a psychological perception of growing control (paralleling Couto's pre-political stage) and actual political participation in the community (parallelling the political stage). The model also provides a useful distinction between the insular focus of the pre-political stage and the link to other communities and broader societal processes in the political stage.

5.2.4.4.   Kieffer (1984):

Perhaps the most detailed stage analysis of the psychological aspects of empowerment, is Kieffer's (1984) approach, based on open-ended interviews with community leaders concerning their own processes of empowerment. By adopting a stage approach, he stresses that empowerment involves a process of growing development, rather than being a finite state.

Using developmental language, Kieffer describes his subjects' growth from a state of socio-political infancy and powerlessness, to adult competency. The empowerment process begins with an era of entry, initiated by a mobilising episode, likened to the process of birth. Thus the individual experiences a highly traumatic incident, when his/her sense of self and deep-rooted attachment to the community is violated, provoking a response and thus beginning the process to empowerment. It is essential that this experience is a forceful and emotionally significant one, characterised by a deeply experienced sense of outrage, to provoke the individual to take action. A process of exploratory participation begins and the individual also begins to demystify and confront authority, and reorient her/himself in relation to established power structures, thus taking the first tentative steps away from dependence on authority.

Kieffer's analysis of this stage shows some similarities to Tajfel's presence of cognitive alternatives in his Social Identity Theory (1981). Tajfel argues that in order for groups to challenge the established status hierarchy, they have to perceive existing power relations as illegitimate and unstable, and hence open to be challenged. This is similar to Kieffer's reorienting of the self in relation to established power structures and move away from passive dependence on existing structures.

Kieffer's second stage is the era of advancement, likened to childhood. Interpersonal relations are important during this stage, especially the establishment of a mentoring relationship with the professional responsible for the intervention. Like Swift (1984), Kieffer emphasises the role of the expert as collaborator and mentor, seeing him/her as a friend or benevolent parent, providing concrete skills and emotional support, and assisting in the expression of latent competencies. Supportive relationships within the community are also important, providing a nurturing environment within which fears can be expressed and risks taken. During this stage

the individual also grows in socio-political understanding, realising the interconnectedness of social, political and economic concerns as impacting on individual behaviour.

During the era of incorporation (likened to adolescence), self-concept, identity and social roles mature and the individual gains confidence in his/her ability to act effectively in the world. Leadership and organisational skills are developed, and new feelings of competence and confidence are incorporated into the self-concept. Like Couto's (1989) political stage, this is a stage of mature political understanding as the individual learns that s/he is not invincible, and gains critical understanding of the limits and barriers to his/her empowerment.

In the era of commitment, or adulthood, newly discovered competencies are integrated with daily realities. The individual also approaches new contexts where these can be applied, leading to the empowerment of others. This parallels Rappaport's (1984b) notion of empowerment, not as a scarce resource, but rather as a self-perpetuating process of development.

Kieffer's most important contribution to the study of empowerment is his focus on empowerment as a developmental process rather than a fixed state. The implications of this for intervention are firstly that the role of the expert is likely to change due to the unique demands of each stage, and also that ongoing evaluation is essential to measure the dynamic nature of the empowerment process and the different outcomes from one stage to the next.

Kieffer's model is also useful in separating empowerment, or feeling more in control, from having actual power. His subjects did not necessarily gain formal authority though their sense of control improved, allowing them to participate more actively in working for change: "The fundamental empowering transformation, then, is in the transition from self as helpless victim to acceptance of self as assertive and efficacious citizen" (Kieffer, 1984, p. 32).

The model also provides one of the most thorough accounts of the psychological stages and processes experienced by individuals in their transition from helpless victim to empowered, active participant in the world. Kieffer's work could, however, be criticised for its exclusively individual focus and for omitting community and organisational factors impacting on

empowerment. As such, it provides only a partial explanation and needs to be combined with models targeting these broader processes, such as that of Speer and Hughey (1995).

5.2.4.5.   Zimmerman (1990a and 1995):

Zimmerman's model of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990a; 1995 and Zimmerman, Israel, Schultz and Checkoway, 1992) also targets an individual level of analysis, although he argues that psychological empowerment also includes socio-political factors. He distinguishes between individual and psychological empowerment, with the former defined as a unitary personality trait, such as locus of control or self-efficacy. Psychological empowerment, on the other hand, includes multiple intra-psychic traits, brought together with an analysis of the collective context in which individuals find themselves, as well as mediating factors, such as access to resources, that influence decision-making: "Psychological empowerment is a contextual construct that requires an ecological analysis of individual knowledge, decision-making processes, and person-environment fit" (Zimmerman, 990a, p. 175).

Because psychological empowerment is dynamic and varies over time, involving different ideas, skills and behaviours in various contexts (Rappaport, 1984b), it is difficult to operationalise. Zimmerman (1995) therefore argues that the best way of defining the construct may be as a complex network of possible components which may combine to lead to empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995). These generic components should then be operationalised within the specific context under study.

Zimmerman's (1995) framework of psychological empowerment has three components. The intra-personal component focuses on one's perception of one's ability to exert control over the environment. Included here are such factors as context-specific self-efficacy, perceived skills and competencies, and the motivation to control one's environment as well as the absence of feelings of helplessness, powerlessness and alienation.

The interactional component is gained through interacting with others in one's community and acts as a bridge between intra-psychic perception of control, and actions taken to gain control. Included here are interpersonal skills such as assertiveness, critical understanding of the

environmental resources needed to realise one's goals as well as the ability to access these. This component has much in common with Kieffer's (1984) second stage of empowerment.

The third component is actual participation in the community. This is measured behaviourally, and involves actions that demonstrate one's sense of empowerment. These include participation in community activities and organisations, thus linking psychological empowerment to broader organisational and community level processes.

The notion of psychological empowerment has been empirically tested. Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) found moderate correlations between eleven measures of perceived control and identified one discriminant function, suggesting that all eleven measures were aspects of the same underlying construct, namely psychological empowerment. This composite measure of psychological empowerment correlated positively with leadership experiences and participation in community activities and negatively with perceptions of alienation from socio-political life.

In an extension of this study, Zimmerman et al. (1992) reduced psychological empowerment to three measures, namely perceived personal and community control over decision-making, effectiveness of individual actions to influence community decisions and perceived difficulty to influence community issues. Participation was operationalised as the number of community groups belonged to and the extent of involvement, community activities participated in and leadership roles adopted. The reduction from 11 to three measures of control thus allows for tighter control, while the inclusion of four measures of participation allows for greater detail concerning participation. Results replicated the previous study. High participators scored highest on all three measures of control, and the combined variance of the three measures of control led to a single discriminant function that separated high, low and non-participants.

The above studies provide empirical support for the construct of psychological empowerment and articulate the relationship between the intra-personal component of Zimmerman's (1995) model and participation in the community (the behavioural component). They also draw together the two key components of Rappaport's (1987) definition of empowerment, namely the perception of control and actual democratic participation in the community. Both studies, however, focus on the intra-personal and behavioural aspects of psychological empowerment,

but exclude the interactional component, highlighting the need for further research exploring the relationship between all three components. A further weakness is their correlational rather than causal approach, making it impossible to determine whether participation leads to an increase in psychological empowerment, or whether empowered individuals are more likely to participate in the community than non-empowered ones.

5.2.4.6.   Summary of models and relation to current intervention:

Taken together the above models provide a composite explanation of empowerment at multiple levels of analysis. Kieffer (1984) offers a thorough account of the stages through which individuals progress on their way to empowerment, while Zimmerman (1995) adds to this intra-psychic process, an understanding of the socio-political context and community participation. Couto (1989), Rich *et al.* (1995) and Speer and Hughey (1995) shift focus to the organisational and community levels of analysis, with Rich *et al.* providing an account of the multiple paths to empowerment and Speer and Hughey finding a reciprocal relationship between the development of social power in community organisations and the psychological empowerment of members.

While none of the models provide a complete account of empowerment, this should not be viewed as a criticism .The partial explanations offered are consistent with Rappaport (1984b) and Zimmerman's (1995) emphasis on the contextual and dynamic nature of empowerment varying according to setting and level of analysis. Thus the above models should be seen as guidelines, to be adapted according to the specific community and level of ecological analysis.

As the current intervention sought to empower students to take control of their learning, the models most relevant are those which target individuals, namely those of Kieffer (1984) and Zimmerman (1995). The current study adopted a view of empowerment as a process of both skills and self development, rather than a fixed, finite state (drawing from the work of Kieffer, 1984 and Rich *et al.*, 1995). Empowerment was also conceived as a network of interrelated aspects, specific to the context of academic study. Drawing from the work of Zimmerman (1995) these aspects were considered to be intra-psychic aspects of empowerment, such as motivation, self esteem and perceived control, interactional aspects including assertiveness and co-operation, and aspects of study behaviour, including active and autonomous learning styles.

The current intervention also rested on Rich *et al.*'s assumption (1995) that individual empowerment precedes organisational empowerment, rather than adopting Speer and Hughey's view (1995) that individuals become empowered by participating in empowered organisations. Thus formal empowerment opportunities were provided in the form of the tutorial programme, which empowered individuals, so that they gained the confidence, control and interpersonal skills to contribute to wider change processes (instrumental empowerment).

5.2.5. Empowerment interventions:

Drawing on the work of Trickett, Kelly and Todd (1972 in Rappaport, 1977) empowerment interventions are guided by four ecological principles. The principle of interdependence emphasises the importance of understanding a whole system before intervening therein, as all components are inter-related and change in one component leads to changes throughout the system. All interventions must therefore identify and target the most appropriate level of intervention, either individual, small group, organisational or community(Zimmerman, 1995).

The principle of cycling of resources focuses on how resources are distributed in a system. The goal of intervention is to mobilise and redistribute existing resources and natural competencies, rather than providing resources from without, as in a typical helper-helpee relationship. Expert and community thus collaborate in a process of mutual development, with the expert acting as facilitator and mentor, allowing for the expression of existing competencies (Kieffer, 1984). This is in contrast to the traditional helper-helpee relationship characterised by large status differences and dependence on the expert (Heller *et al.*, 1984). Emphasis is also placed on the nurturing role of the community, providing a caring context within which individual growth becomes possible. The intervention should therefore be guided by a set of philosophical principles specific to the context, developed jointly by consultant and community. In addition the working relationship should be one of co-operation and communication with all parties involved in decision making and participants assigned to tasks based on ability or potential not credentials (Reppucci and Sanders, 1974 in Omprakash,1989).

The principle of adaptation argues that systems continually change and adapt to an ever-changing environment, with each environment demanding a set of specific adaptive skills, unique to that particular context. This principle also implies that empowerment is not a scarce

commodity, soon depleted, but rather should be viewed as a self-perpetuating force that expands once shared among a community. Interventions must therefore acknowledge the dynamic and contextual nature of empowerment, rather than trying to impose a universally applicable solution. This requires the change agent to have a large repertoire of change strategies, which can be adapted to a specific situation (Rappaport, 1977). Interventions are best if constructed around a communal understanding of empowerment rather than the understanding of the expert or community leader (Strawn, 1994 in Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler and Yapchai 1998). This ensures that the expectations of all participants are met by the intervention. It often requires the design of complex, multidimensional interventions, however, allowing many possible pathways to empowerment to meet the varying needs of different participants, as in Rich *et al.*'s (1995) model.

Lastly, the principle of succession argues that because systems are in a state of dynamic flux, it is important to explore the effects of change over time (Rappaport, 1977). It is also important that the process of intervention be given adequate time to allow for self development and the practising of new and existing skills, as empowerment cannot be taught, but only learnt through direct experience (Kieffer, 1984). At the same time, however, empowerment should not be thought of simply as the development of new skills, but rather requires the reconstruction of one's entire way of experiencing oneself and one's context, as highlighted in Kieffer's (1984) model. For this reason, empowerment requires considerable time and resource investment in a community. According to Kieffer (1984), a thorough empowerment process can take as long as four years or more.

5.3. EMPOWERMENT'S LINKS WITH OTHER CONSTRUCTS:

As one of the aims of this thesis is the development of a measure of empowerment as linked to similar constructs, it is necessary to explore some of these links. There are similarities between work on empowerment and combatting experiences of helplessness (Rubin, 1976 in Kieffer, 1984), perceptions of control (Rotter,1966), perceived competence (Rappaport,1985) and community participation (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990). Empowerment also overlaps with self efficacy and locus of control (Kieffer, 1984 and Zimmerman, 1995). Zimmerman (1995) argues that these constructs form a nomological network to which empowerment is linked, but from which it is also separated due to its complex, multidimensional nature.

The constructs to which empowerment has been linked can be divided into two categories. On the one hand, are individual personality variables such as self esteem or locus of control, while on the other hand are broader social constructs such as power or sense of community. Emphasis will be placed in the following discussion on those constructs directly measured as part of the empowerment questionnaire or addressed in the empowerment programme.

5.3.1. Empowerment and personality constructs:

Empowerment overlaps with a variety of personality concepts including self esteem and self efficacy as well as various aspects of control such as locus of control and learned helplessness.

Self esteem is one of the constructs measured on the empowerment questionnaire and refers to an individual's judgements of his/her own worth (Coopersmith, 1967 in Zimbardo *et al.*, 1995), usually operationalised as the gap between a person's ideal and actual sense of self (Scott and Spencer, 1998). Although only directly explored in a few studies (Kieffer, 1984), a rise in self esteem among empowered individuals and communities is to be expected as interventions aimed at developing greater control over the environment and seeking to evoke latent strengths and competencies would presumably also lead to a higher sense of self worth.

Differences in self esteem have been linked to a variety of behaviours and experiences. People with higher self esteem are found to be more resilient at handling stress (Brown and McGill, 1989 in Baron, 1995), experience fewer negative emotions and depression (Straumann and Higgins, 1988 in Baron, 1995),have greater confidence in their ability to realise goals (Wells and Marwell, 1976 in Baron, 1995)and are more likely to seek out situations where they excel (Baumeister, 1997),than individuals with low self esteem. They also have a clearer, more consistent view of themselves and their abilities, and are better able to organise their performance than individuals with a low self esteem, who tend to have a confused, unstable and contradictory view of the self (Campbell, 1990 in Baumeister, 1997).Taken together these findings suggest multiple possible benefits of empowerment, through its impact on raising low self esteem, as hopefully achieved by the empowerment programme in the current study.

Self efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's own capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.3), and hence academic self

efficacy can be thought of as beliefs regarding one's ability to succeed academically. Self efficacy may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Students with strong beliefs in their academic abilities, for example, put more effort into their studies and hence do well, while those who have little confidence in their ability to succeed often lose motivation and thus fail. The empowerment programme thus sought to impact on students' self efficacy regarding their academic performance by providing opportunities for mastery of learning using an approach similar to the Science Foundation Programme discussed in the previous chapter (Grayson, 1994).

Direct links have been explored between empowerment and self-efficacy, with Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) finding a moderate correlation between self efficacy and other aspects included in their construct of psychological empowerment and also finding that individuals who participated in their communities had a higher self efficacy than those who did not.

Empowerment also overlaps with the study of control, and in particular constructs such as learned helplessness and locus of control. The latter (Rotter, 1966) distinguishes between people on the basis of their tendency to expect outcomes to be the result of their own behaviour or external, uncontrollable forces. Individuals with an internal locus of control perceive reinforcements as contingent on their own behaviour or internal characteristics, while those with an external locus of control claim to have no control over outcomes but rather view these as a result of fate, luck, powerful others or uncontrollable forces (Rotter, 1966).

Locus of control is linked to empowerment in a number of studies and theoretical approaches. Rappaport's definition (1987) includes a psychological sense of control as one of the two key aspects of empowerment. He stresses, however, that this, on its own, does not constitute empowerment, but must be combined with actual participation in the community. Zimmerman (1995) also includes locus of control as part of the intra-personal component of psychological empowerment, but combines this with interactional and behavioural components. Locus of control is also included as one of eleven measures of psychological empowerment in Zimmerman and Rappaport's study (1988), and a measure of personal and community control forms part of Zimmerman *et al.*'s study of psychological empowerment (1992).

Although usually treated as a stable personality trait, recent studies (Cooper, 1991 and Lefcourt, 1981 both in Ncgobo, 1995) suggest that locus of control might have more in common with the context-dependent notion of empowerment than at first seemed the case. As with empowerment (Rappaport, 1984b), it now seems possible for locus of control to vary with life experiences, and for individuals to demonstrate an internal locus of control in one context, but not another (Perkel, 1988 in Ngcobo, 1995).

The aspect of control most closely linked to empowerment is that of learned helplessness, the process whereby experiences of non-control over outcomes lead to a state of helplessness and passivity, even in future controllable situations (Peterson, Maier and Seligman, 1993). Applied to human subjects three components are demonstrated. Firstly a random, uncontrollable relation between actions and outcomes is experienced. This is followed by cognitions as the individual perceives the relationship as uncontrollable, explains what has happened and forms an expectation of the uncontrollability of future events. Finally these cognitions are acted upon, leading to passive behavioural responses (Peterson *et al.*, 1993).

The observation of high levels of learned helplessness among black students, which motivated this study, may thus have been the result of their perception that no matter how hard they worked they did not achieve success in Psychology. This led to an expectation of future failure and hence they responded passively and gave up trying.

To explain the conditions under which helplessness in one situation generalises to another, concepts from attribution theory are proposed as mediating between one's experience of an uncontrollable event and enduring passive behaviour. Attributions are made along three dimensions. Firstly they are made in terms of the specificity or globality of the cause, which determines whether expectations of hopelessness are limited to one situation or generalise to others. Secondly the event is explained as stable or unstable. This determines whether expectations of helplessness persist over time. Lastly events are explained as due to internal or external causes. If the event is perceived as due to internal causes, loss of self esteem is likely. Hence an individual who makes global, stable and internal attributions for uncontrollable events will experience a generalised, long-lasting state of learned helplessness and a drop in self esteem (Peterson *et al.*, 1993).

black students who blamed the system for their failures showed higher levels of social activism than those who took responsibility for failures. This study advances learned helplessness theory by indicating that non-control does not necessarily lead to helplessness but may facilitate change, depending on how a community interpret uncontrollable events. This has implications for intervention, allowing for the identification of strategies whereby expectancies of non-control can be changed and unrealistic attributions adjusted to more specific, external and unstable ones, thus preventing the experience of passivity.

5.3.2. Empowerment and social constructs:

Empowerment also has much in common with various social constructs including the concepts of power, sense of community, social support and collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is an extension of Bandura's concept of self efficacy, and refers to "a group's shared beliefs in its conjoint capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). Bandura promotes collective efficacy as a theoretically sounder construct than empowerment, due to the vast body of research and theory related to self efficacy. Results of many studies demonstrate that across diverse types of groups, collective efficacy is a strong predictor of group performance, with groups holding stronger beliefs about their collective ability, able to achieve more than those with weaker collective efficacy (Bandura, 1983 and Prussia and Kinicki, 1996, both in Bandura, 1997). It should be remembered, however, that cognitive aspects such as group beliefs are merely one aspect of the multidimensional construct of empowerment. Aspects of empowerment such as democratic participation in the community, and socio-political understanding of the barriers to empowerment are not included in Bandura's collective efficacy concept.

Social support refers to the enduring support of family, friends and colleagues, who provide one with information, material resources and emotional support (Perkel, 1988 in Ngcobo, 1995). Social support leads individuals to believe they are valued and belong to a community. Social support has been directly linked to empowerment in a number of studies, including those of Zimmerman (1995) where it forms the basis for his interpersonal component of psychological empowerment, and Speer and Hughey (1995) who argue that empowerment depends in part on the strength of interpersonal relations among community members.

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The closely allied concept of sense of community also has links to empowerment. Studies have found that people with a strong relational attachment to their community also tend to participate actively in that community and feel empowered within it (Chavis and Newbrough, 1986, Chavis and Wandersman, 1990 and McMillan and Chavis, 1986). This makes sense as many aspects of empowerment, including gathering resources, forming coalitions and instituting plans of action depend on a common purpose in the community. Hence it is easier to exert collective influence if the community is a close-knit, supportive one than if members are alienated and disconnected from one another.

Supportive group relations and a sense of common purpose were key aspects of the empowerment programme for this study. Various strategies were used to encourage a sense of unity within the group, including provision of many opportunities for group discussion, exercises to encourage friendship formation and the encouragement of peer study groups.

The link between empowerment and power is an important one, although directly explored by only a few authors such as Speer and Hughey (1995) who explore the relationship between the empowerment of community members and social power, as discussed earlier. Riger (1984) also explores the links between formal power and empowerment, in her exploration of feminist organisations. She claims that it is simplistic to assume that empowerment implies the equalisation of power, arguing that organisations that adopt a completely non-hierarchical, collectivist structure, such as many student or feminist organisations, often fail. This is due to their lack of structure, an obsession with process rather than reaching goals, a decision making style based on emotion rather than rational appraisal of alternatives, and the lengthy time required for consultation. Instead, Riger advocates the notion of "mandated responsibility" as empowering, whereby the collective give power to key individuals to make decisions, with clear rules of accountability and mutual respect for one another.

It is therefore important to distinguish between empowerment and power. The former implies a feeling of self control and active community participation while the latter suggests a formal, structural position of authority in an organisational hierarchy (Zimmerman, 1995). This highlights one of the strengths of empowerment interventions, namely that it is possible for organisational members with low status and little authority to exert influence in an empowered manner (Mechanic, 1962). Gruber and Trickett's (1987) analysis of the participation of parents

and pupils on a school decision making board, for example, revealed that parents and pupils became empowered even though power to change school policy still resided with the school authorities. Parents and pupils gained the confidence to suggest areas for change, developed an understanding of the resources and constraints of the school system and were able to monitor the actions of school authorities, despite their relative lack of formal authority. This issue is of relevance to the current thesis, and will be referred to again later. The programme was not planned to change students' formal position within the university hierarchy. However it was hoped that they would, nonetheless, grow in confidence and control and thus be able to make a contribution to wider change processes .

5.3.3. <u>Empowerment as a bridge between the personal and the political:</u>

Although empowerment overlaps with all of the above concepts, none shares its complex nature. Although self efficacy or control, for example, overlap with the first part of Rappaport's (1987) definition of empowerment (a sense of personal control), they do not overlap with the second half (actual participation in one's community), essential for empowerment to move beyond the intra-psychic to the community and social domains. Studies such as those of Zimmerman (1990a) and Zimmerman *et al.* (1992) also demonstrate that control is merely one aspect of empowerment, with other aspects including skills and self development, interpersonal relationships and organisational and community participation.

Empowerment theory and practice can thus be thought of as a valuable bridge between a set of mainstream personality and cognitive constructs like control and self efficacy, on the one hand, and broader issues such as power, sense of community and democratic participation on the other hand. What it offers constructs like control or self efficacy, is evidence of actual experiences of control applied to real life settings rather than research limited to perceptions of increased control in laboratory settings. At the same time it provides intervention strategies that concretise abstract notions like power and politics, indicating how communities and individuals can gain greater control over their environment and increase their access to societal resources. It thus remains for the last chapter of this literature review to explore some of these strategies as used within various interventions and research studies, with particular emphasis on the application to education, before offering a critique of work in the area of empowerment.

CHAPTER SIX: APPLICATION OF EMPOWERMENT THEORY TO EDUCATION:

The last chapter of this literature review outlines some of the central principles of community psychological research, before focussing specifically on the application of such research to the educational arena and finally offering a critique of empowerment theory and applications.

6.1. COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH:

6.1.1. Principles and practices of community psychological research:

The differences between community psychological and empirical research are so fundamental that they could be considered separate research paradigms. While empiricism espouses the value of objectivity, community psychology acknowledges that a researcher's values and assumptions colour the research process and so should be made explicit.

In striving for neutrality, empiricism distances science from issues of social and political change, often restricting itself to topics of pure scientific interest rather than those with real world application (Weber, 1946 in Stokols,1986). Community psychological research, on the other hand, is not an end in itself, but a way of gaining increased understanding of community problems to bring about effective change (Kelly, 1986 and Stokols, 1986). Research is thus considered a tool for social action, aiming to assess community needs, design and implement the best course of action, evaluate such interventions, and supply useful products, which an empowered community can access for their further development (Heller *et al.*, 1984).

The central principle around which all community psychological research and interventions are designed is that of collaboration. While subjects in an empirical study have a distant, impersonal relation to the researcher and make no contribution to research design or data collection, community psychological research is considered a mutually beneficial partnership between researcher and community (Kelly, 1986). Hence instead of taking what one requires at the expense of the community, participatory researchers match the research to the specific development needs of the community.

Collaboration with the community should not be considered dichotomous with no collaboration, but according to Chavis, Wandersman and Stucky (1983) may involve five possible levels of increasing community participation in the research process, as follows:

- Level One:

  No participation - the researcher takes data from the subjects and has no further contact with them.

- Level Two:

  The researcher sends a short summary or technical report of findings to subjects on completion of the project.

- Level Three:

  Participation involves discussion between researcher and participants regarding how to best utilise the findings to the benefit of the community.

- Level Four:

  The community help in designing and developing the project.

- Level Five:

  The community initiate and conduct the research.

It can thus be seen that a truly collaborative research style may impact on all stages of the research process, from topic choice, to research design, data collection, interpretation and feedback to the community in an understandable form (Bishop, 1994). While the risk exists of a loss of objectivity, the potential benefits of a collaborative research style include enhancement of the usefulness of the research to solve real world problems and greater legitimacy, public interest and support for the research (Perkins and Wandersman, 1990 in Perkins, 1995). Collaboration with students was built into the design of the current study at several stages including design of the programme and choice of content, weekly feedback concerning the programme's direction and design of the evaluation process.

6.1.2. Community psychological research methods - action research:

No one preferred method of community psychological research exists, but rather researchers choose from a host of methods, including methods for assessing community needs, experimental designs to test the effectiveness of an intervention, and programme evaluation (Orford, 1992). A commonly used method, which informed the present study, is action research "research done in an actual context, aimed at being socially useful as well as theoretically meaningful" (Lazarus, 1985, p. 113).

According to Winter (1987), the practice of action research is guided by three core values. Firstly, it espouses the value of reflexivity between the research and its context. Hence researchers must continually reflect on their actions and adapt them according to the dynamic nature of the context studied. Secondly, action research advocates a dialectic, non-linear relationship between research stages. The research process is conceived of as a spiral of planning, action, observation and reflection, leading to further planning (Hooking, 1985). Lastly, action research advocates the value of collaboration between community and researcher to ensure the relevance of the research to solving community problems.

Action research is well suited to empowerment research as it advocates the boosting of existing competencies. Communities are encouraged to generate their own actions and use research findings to improve their current situation thus overcoming feelings of powerlessness. The participation of the researcher in the community also allows the context to be experienced from within thus providing more accurate information.

These benefits are not gained without a price however. According to Rapoport (1970) action research is faced with a dilemma - in meeting the criterion of relevant social action, it moves away from scientific rigour, facing methodological criticisms such as lack of control over variables, small sample sizes and loss of objectivity. Lazarus (1985) challenges this last criticism, however, arguing that all research is influenced by the subjective presence of the researcher, and that the immersion of the action researcher in the context studied may produce data that is more accurate and less biassed than that uncovered from a supposedly detached

perspective. The naturalistic nature of action research also increases its ecological validity, creating data that is a more honest, accurate reflection of its context. Advances within the field of qualitative research (Speer *et al.*, 1992) have also resulted in greater methodological rigour and hence a more pragmatic approach to the choice of methodology has been noted since the 1980s. It is impossible, therefore, to dismiss qualitative research as methodologically inferior to empiricism. Garfinkel (in Winter, 1987) adopts a similar viewpoint, arguing that the tendency to uphold empirical criteria as universally true, creates a false dichotomy between the apparent ideals of empiricism and the comparative weaknesses of action research. He claims that action research should be judged according to its own standards of rigour rather than dismissed as a weak form of applied empiricism. These include credibility of data, transferability of information and trustworthiness of research methods used (Hooking, 1985).

6.2. THE APPLICATION OF EMPOWERMENT THEORY TO THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION:

Educational institutions provide a common site for empowerment research and interventions, for a number of reasons. Firstly, they provide easy access to large numbers of subjects, and secondly, the effects of empowerment at this level are likely to be long lasting because children are impressionable during their formative years (Perkins, 1995). I also consider the traditionally hierarchical organisational structure of schools and universities to be well suited to the study of empowerment, allowing for the comparison of traditional power structures with alternative, more democratic arrangements.

6.2.1. <u>Features of an empowering education:</u>

Several researchers (Cummins, 1986; Fasheh, 1990 and "Participatory Learning", 1995) have articulated key principles of an empowering education. While most of their attempts consist of theoretical discussions, the current study extends existing literature by putting these principles into practice and evaluating their impact. According to the above authors traditional education is hierarchically structured, with information travelling in one direction from a knowledgeable teacher to supposedly ignorant students. Empowering forms of education, on the other hand, recognise the value of students' existing knowledge, seeking to

boost present competencies and, in the process, build confidence. Active and experiential methods of teaching and learning are also used and local experiences are valued and emphasised, aiming at building a sense of self worth and self acceptance among learners. Formal education, in its traditional forms, however, is often distant and foreign to students. They are assigned the role of passive recipient of knowledge and excluded from curriculum planning and decision making. Empowering learning, on the other hand, is collaborative, with learners active in setting their own learning goals, leading to greater commitment to study ("Participatory Learning", 1995).

One of the most thorough accounts of an empowering education is proposed by Cummins (1986) who relates high minority failure rates to power relations between students and teachers and minority and majority groups in the broader society. While minority failure is often interpreted as the result of language difficulties, costly linguistic reforms have had little impact on failure rates, suggesting the role of complex factors, such as power relations in society, or the cultural identity of minority groups. As evidence for the role of these factors, Cummins cites the finding that Finnish students do well in Australian schools, where they are regarded as a high status group, but poorly in Sweden, where they constitute a low status minority (Troike, 1978 in Cummins, 1986). He therefore argues that any educational reform has to be interpreted within the context of power relations between social groups as the same patterns of disempowerment occur within schools as in the broader society.

Four structural factors within the educational context are then identified which readjust power relations between minority and majority groups and therefore empower minority students. Firstly attempts should be made to value and incorporate the minority culture and language within the educational setting rather than seeking to replace students' primary culture and language. Secondly community and parental participation in education should be encouraged. Thirdly pedagogical factors play a role in the empowerment of minority students. A traditional education is hierarchically structured. It focuses on the giving of knowledge by a superior teacher, who controls all classroom interactions, to pupils who lack knowledge and are therefore considered inferior. An empowering methodology, on the other hand, views teaching as a collaboration between learners and a teacher who facilitates rather than controls learning.

Tasks are designed to generate intrinsic motivation and develop meaningful rather than rote learning. Finally Cummins calls for assessment to be used to advocate for the rights of minority groups and focus attention on societal and educational contextual causes of failure. This contrasts with the conventional use of assessment to label minority students as "at risk" or "having deficits" thus blaming them for their own failures.

Cummins' approach is useful in highlighting the relationship between the empowerment of minority students and broader societal power relations. He articulates one of the main reasons why some empowerment interventions fail, namely that they leave unchallenged relations between teachers and students, schools and minority communities and minority and majority groups in society at large. He also points out that interventions aimed solely at addressing the language difficulties of minority groups are doomed to fail, because they ignore the interdependence of academic and linguistic factors on one hand, and cultural identity and power issues on the other. This makes his model particularly relevant to the South African tertiary context, where high failure rates among black students are often interpreted as the result of second language difficulties, leading to a proliferation of academic literacy and writing courses, most of which ignore the issue of institutional and societal power relations.

Cummins' approach is also an important one in relation to this study, which rejects the focus on academic and linguistic skills of most student development interventions, as well as the focus on institutional transformation currently advocated by academic development, on the grounds that both ignore students' feelings of powerlessness. By empowering students and increasing their sense of confidence and control, the present study sought to change the power relations between staff and students, empowering students to gain the confidence to challenge certain aspects of their studies, thus elevating their status and addressing Cummins' concerns.

Although Cummins' approach is central to a discussion on academic empowerment, his model is a theoretical one, based on anecdotal evidence. To evaluate its efficacy, detailed comparison of institutions adopting such a model with those using traditional approaches is needed.

Like Cummins, Maton and Salem (1995) move beyond the level of individual factors, to identify empowering structural features common to a non-denominational church, a mutual help organisation for the mentally ill, and the Meyerhoff Scholars Programme (M.S.P.). This is a programme for African American students at a largely white university, with potential in the sciences. Features of the M.S.P. included peer study, co-operative learning, nurturing relations with a tutor, development of appropriate academic skills and teaching students to access relevant university resources, similar features to those emphasised in the current programme.

Using a multiple case study method, four empowering organisational features were identified. Firstly was the presence of a belief system that inspired growth among participants and sought to encourage the development of existing competencies. In the M.S.P., for example, students were explicitly taught that, given access to resources such as staff help, study groups and peer tutoring, they all had the potential for psycho-social and academic growth.

Secondly, all three organisations provided opportunities for participants to adopt multiple roles, requiring a range of skills. All students in the M.S.P. were encouraged to join study groups, participate in research and volunteer for community outreach programmes.

All three organisations also offered both material and emotional support. The M.S.P. offered formal staff support as well as opportunities for informal, peer-based support and a sense of belonging to the group. Opportunities for both formal skills development and emotional support were also provided in the current study to be discussed in the following chapter.

The last feature identified, was the presence of committed leaders who inspired and supported growth among members. The M.S.P. was led by the African American president of the university, who had a clear vision of black students achieving success and communicated this to staff and students. Emphasis was also placed on affirmation of students by leaders at all levels, from senior students to the university president.

This study is one of few to focus directly on the empowering organisational features of a diverse range of community organisations. It is, however, somewhat limited by the lack of

comparison with non-empowering settings, making it difficult to determine whether the above features are, indeed, unique to empowering settings. Future research is therefore needed to determine the extent to which findings are unique to empowering organisations as well as the extent to which they can be generalised to other types of empowering settings. While the qualitative nature of the study allows for detailed analysis of the features of empowering contexts, a link between the above organisational processes and empowering outcomes, as distinguished by Zimmerman (1995) has not been established. Quasi-experimental studies exploring the link between the above features of the M.S.P. and outcomes such as improved academic performance, in comparison with a control group, are therefore needed.

To summarise the above findings, an education that empowers, seeks to boost competences and values learners' language and culture. It is also active, experiential and collaborative, encouraging learners to set their own goals and valuing parental and community participation. Such learning takes place in a context that supports growth and development. An empowering education also challenges existing power relations between groups.

6.2.2. Educational empowerment interventions:

The above features have formed the foundation for a number of interventions. The Bernard Van Leer Foundation, for example, is committed to funding projects in developing countries, based on the above principles of community education and empowerment ("Participatory Learning", 1995). The Community Publishing Process in Zimbabwe, is one of their projects and emphasises ownership of learning by students (Nyathi and Chikuhuhu, 1995). They collaborate in the design and production of their own curriculum and materials, including research and planning, writing, editing, printing, distribution and finally evaluation of materials. A similar emphasis on collaboration is found in the Mexican 'New Spaces for Education' programme, a child care programme for mothers (Linares, 1995). Parents' self esteem, self efficacy and confidence are boosted so they take greater control of their children's education. Similar emphasis on self development is found in the Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (C.H.E.T.N.A.), which provides community health training for Indian women and children (Capoor and Vakharia, 1995). Effective empowerment is not

seen merely as a process of skills development, but also emotional, social and psychological development. Hence empowerment cannot provide a quick fix solution or show immediate changes, but involves a long-term, continuous process of growth and development.

Through comparison of child development projects in a slum and rural settlement in Thailand, the Schools without Frontiers project (Richard, 1995) realised the importance of a sense of community to empowerment. As the slum consisted of a migratory group, with no community ties or established structures, a sense of community had to be established, before attempts at empowerment could prove effective. The rural community, on the other hand, had traditional structures and a sense of unity, and therefore empowerment proceeded more quickly.

Although formal evaluation of the above Bernard Van Leer Foundation projects is lacking, they demonstrate several key aspects of an empowerment process. These include a sense of community among participants, community collaboration at all stages of an intervention, and a balance between skills and self development. In addition the importance of a suitably long time frame for empowerment is highlighted, and the necessity of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of initiatives. All of these features were part of the design of the current study.

Lazarus's (1985) action research study attempted to understand the educational experiences of a group of black adolescents who had dropped out of school and were participating in an alternative educational programme. Her study is one of few to directly apply the principles of action research and empowerment to the local educational context, using these to develop a set of guidelines for an empowering education. Hers is also one of few South African studies to explore the experiences of students closer in age and background to those studied in this thesis. In aim, methodology, content and population, her study thus overlaps with this one.

Multiple qualitative methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviews and small group discussions were used to gather information about students' previous experiences in the formal educational sector and current experiences in this programme. Students reported feelings of alienation and powerlessness at their previous school, which they attributed to such factors as an authoritarian teaching style, excessive use of rote learning and the absence of

critical thinking or academic debate. In this setting, however, they perceived themselves as having greater control over their learning, which they attributed to their participation in the programme, with particular emphasis on its collaborative nature, a focus on the socio-political context within which learning occurred, the development of autonomous learning skills and the emphasis on critical thinking and debate. These were all features incorporated into the design of the current programme, to be discussed in the following chapter.

The action research methodology was considered empowering in providing students with opportunities to express themselves and reflect on their own educational experiences, thus gaining greater self awareness. Feelings of self worth were also increased due to students' perception that they were contributing to educational change (Lazarus, 1985).

Students developed a set of recommendations for an empowering education, including collaboration in all aspects of the educational process, critical evaluation of the socio-political context within which learning takes place, training in communication, and the development of feelings of control, competence and confidence. These elements again highlight the need to balance self and skills development, as discussed above (Capoor and Vakharia, 1995).

I consider this study a valuable one, both in its use of an action research methodology as a way of increasing student empowerment, and in the development of recommendations for an empowering education. These recommendations not only allow students to improve their own situation, but can be applied to other contexts, contributing to the empowerment of others. Lazarus (1985) does mention several methodological concerns, including the small sample size, lack of control over variables, and reliance on qualitative methods. This last issue should not, however, be viewed as a limitation of the study (as Lazarus implies), but should rather be located within the context of the recent rise in acceptability of qualitative methods in the social sciences, as discussed in section 6.1.2. Hence Lazarus's clear articulation of methods and evidence, use of credible research methods, and development of recommendations which can be transferred from one educational context to another, meet the criteria for rigour in action research (Hooking, 1985) and thus the study should not be judged inferior to empiricism.

An intervention particularly relevant to this thesis is Taylor and Burgess's (1995) two year social work course, one of few attempts to apply the principles of empowerment to tertiary level courses. The course sought to increase learners' sense of control, at the level of personal autonomy, student autonomy, which refers to taking responsibility for one's own learning and finally an overall philosophy of lifelong learning and enquiry applied to all aspects of one's life.

Strategies for developing a sense of empowerment among students included the replacement of lectures on isolated topics with study units on real life issues, tailored to students' unique needs and experiences, and dealt with by co-operative learning groups. Students had choice in the composition of groups, selection of issues to focus on, approaches to the topic and assessment methods. In addition they were free to select from among a set of learning activities or to design their own. Group goal setting, reflection and evaluation also formed an integral part of the learning process.

Qualitative evaluation of the course revealed that students found the approach beneficial and felt that it encouraged good performance, although they stressed the need for orientation to the unique demands of an autonomous learning course. This issue, and the accompanying changes to the course will be expanded upon in section 6.2.5.

6.2.3. <u>Measuring empowerment in an educational context:</u>

An area that has been sorely neglected in the empowerment research and intervention literature is the issue of how to measure empowerment outcomes. Evaluation of interventions appears to be either informal (Cummins, 1986) or qualitative (Lazarus, 1995; Maton and Salem, 1995 and Taylor and Burgess, 1995). While qualitative evaluation allows for rich detail regarding participants' subjective experiences of empowerment, it is difficult to compare interventions across settings. Quantitative measures of empowerment are therefore also needed to measure the outcomes of empowerment processes and allow for comparison between participants and non-participants. Two such attempts are the School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short and Rinehart, 1992) and the Self Empowerment Index (Wilson, 1993), measures of teachers' sense of empowerment to effect change in the school context.

The 38 item School Participant Empowerment Scale (Short and Rinehart, 1992) discriminated between a group of teachers currently involved in an empowering intervention and a control group. Factor analysis led to the identification of six factors of school empowerment, namely decision making, professional growth, status, self efficacy, autonomy and impact.

An attempt at replication, however, cast some doubt on the validity of the scale, failing to confirm the original six sub-scales identified (Klecker and Loadman, 1998). The scale also appears to have poor content validity, omitting such issues as professional knowledge and the relationship between power and knowledge, both considered central to teacher empowerment in the literature (Maeroff, 1988 and Munns and Nunnery, 1993 both in Klecker and Loadman, 1998). It thus appears that more items need to be included and further replication take place, before the scale can be considered a valid measure of teacher empowerment.

The 25 item Self Empowerment Index (Wilson, 1993) is based in part on Maslow's theory of self-actualisation and also on Block's (1987 in Wilson, 1993) theory of organisational empowerment as involving an intra-psychic sense of autonomy and the expression thereof to others. The scale showed good discriminant validity, separating empowered teachers from those who were not. Exploratory factor analysis identified three factors of empowerment, namely an internal sense of autonomy, courage to take risks, and self-reflection. More work is needed, however, to confirm the reliability and validity of the measure.

Both measures represent important initial attempts to explore the measurement of empowerment within an educational context although more work is required, to confirm their reliability and validity. Both measures are also very specific to the empowerment of teachers to contribute to educational transformation and thus could not be adapted for this study. Thus a new measure of empowerment as it relates to study behaviour was required.

6.2.4. Personality aspects of educational empowerment:

The empowerment questionnaire developed for this study was partly used to explore the link between academic performance and such constructs as self esteem and locus of control, as discussed in section 5.3.1. It is therefore important to review the large body of literature linking these personality aspects of empowerment to academic performance. At schools and

universities achievement is often evaluated by comparison to one's peers thus profoundly affecting self esteem and self efficacy and feelings of mastery or helplessness. Educational institutions thus provide a valuable natural research context for the study of these aspects.

A number of studies link self efficacy to academic performance, including that of Bouffard-Bouchard (1990 in Bandura, 1997). Students with high self efficacy concerning their academic ability showed increases in academic performance, set higher goals for themselves and used a wider variety of study strategies than those of similar ability but with lower self efficacy levels.

Bandura (1997) advocates several factors to boost low self efficacy levels, including co-operative learning tasks and self evaluation rather than peer comparisons. He also advocates that learners set proximal, short term goals, which boost self efficacy and performance by breaking complex tasks into sub-tasks and providing standards so students can evaluate their performance. Intrinsic interest also boosts self efficacy and academic performance.

Peterson and Barrett (1987 in Peterson *et al.*, 1993), also found a relationship between academic performance and learned helplessness among students. Those who attributed failures to internal, stable and global causes showed poorer performance than students of matched ability levels who attributed failures to external, temporary and specific causes. Tendencies towards learned helplessness had an enduring effect, with helpless students less likely to seek academic advice than non-helpless students, leading to further poor performance. Learned helplessness could, however, be altered by academic counsellors who explicitly taught students to change the attributions for their failures (Wilson and Linville,1985 in Peterson *et al.*, 1993).

Internal locus of control has also been linked to improved academic performance (Findley and Cooper, 1983 and Mooney, Sherman and Lo Presto, 1991). This makes intuitive sense as students who feel in control of their outcomes are likely to expend more effort to achieve success than those who feel that success is beyond their control. The effect is, however, a small one, with a mean of 0.18 found in a meta-analysis of 98 articles. Stronger effect sizes

were found for males, adolescents rather than young children or students, and in studies using scales specific to the academic context rather than generalised measures of control. No difference in effect size was found for different race groups (Findley and Cooper, 1983).

The mediating influence of age, mentioned above, suggests that the effects of locus of control on academic performance are maximised during adolescence, but have little or no effect at tertiary level. This was confirmed in a study by Watkins (1987), who found no relation between locus of control and academic performance at university level, suggesting that locus of control had become a stable personality factor by late adolescence.

Watkins (1987) did, however, find a significant positive relationship between internal locus of control and the use of an achieving learning style and a negative relation between internality and surface, rote styles of learning. This suggests that greater control is associated with learning styles more appropriate to the tertiary context. Watkins therefore advocates academic skills programmes emphasising autonomous learning and greater control of one's studies as a way of encouraging the shift from surface to achievement oriented learning.

A similar pattern to that of locus of control is identified for self esteem. In a meta-analysis, Hansford and Hattie (1982) found a small, positive relation between self esteem and academic performance, averaging at 0.212. This relationship also increased with age to adolescence, and then decreased for university students, and was also stronger when specific measures of self concept of academic ability rather than global self esteem measures were used. No difference in relationship strength was noted according to gender, but a stronger relationship was found for British, Australian, Canadian and white Americans than for Black subjects. In a similar study to that of Watkins (1987), Abouserie (1995) found a positive relationship between high self esteem and tendency to use deep, achieving learning styles among students, while those with low self esteem relied on rote learning. Academic skills programmes should therefore boost both self esteem and control in order to enhance the use of deep learning styles.

The above studies thus illustrate that a small, but significant relationship exists between academic performance and self efficacy and esteem, locus of control and learned helplessness.

Studies such as those of Sherman (1985 in Watkins, 1987) and Wilson and Linville (1985 in Peterson *et al.*, 1993) indicate the value of interventions aimed at boosting personality aspects of empowerment, as a way of improving academic performance. Academic skills programmes should therefore focus on the social and emotional development of students as well as their cognitive development, in a holistic manner. This should serve to boost students' self esteem and efficacy and sense of control, and thus encourage higher academic performance.

6.2.5. <u>Barriers to educational empowerment:</u>

While many benefits to empowerment exist, a few authors refer to barriers which potentially limit its efficacy. Increased assertiveness as a result of empowerment may, for example, lead to a lack of self discipline and a rigid insistence on one's own views, both of which inhibit the empowerment of others (Lazarus, 1985). Idealism and lack of awareness of the limitations to one's empowerment may also lead to disillusionment when faced with socio-political factors beyond one's control (Lazarus, 1985). Couto (1989) also mentions the need to be aware of the limitations of one's power to effect change, as do Bowen, Bahrick and Ens (1991) who argue that an empowering process must include an analysis of the costs and benefits of change, to highlight those factors that can't be changed by an empowerment process.

An important barrier to empowerment is the presence of pre-existing power differences between groups, as discussed by Cummins (1986) in section 6.2.1. Any organisational structure that gives one group greater access to information, skills and power acts against the empowerment of others. According to Perkins (1995), this constitutes the central paradox of empowerment, namely that attempts by one group to empower another often fail because the organisational context tries to preserve the power differences between the groups.

Serrano-Garcia (1984) considers this inability to alter pre-existing power relations to be a major stumbling block to empowerment in her analysis of a Puerto Rican community development project. If empowerment is defined purely in terms of an increased sense of personal control, then her results indicate that the community were empowered, gaining a new set of skills, a critical awareness of their context and a new sense of competence and

confidence. If the goal of the project was to directly challenge the prevailing ideologies of colonialism and Americanism, however, the project failed and may even have created an illusion that change is possible within an oppressive social context. Returning to Rappaport's (1987) definition of empowerment, true empowerment involves both an increased feeling of control, as well as actual participation in challenging power imbalances in society. For change to be really effective both aspects need to be the target of intervention.

Applied to the educational context, this suggests why attempts by universities, technikons and schools to include students in restructuring and transformation processes often fail. According to Gray, although they are consumers of educational products, students have the least power of all participants in an educational system: "I cannot, in the whole of 25 years of experience in education, recall an instance where the students have been able to exercise decisive and significant influence over educational decisions" (1984, p. 112). Attempts at including them on transformation boards and other bodies, without providing them with skills in committee participation, access to information to make decisions, or power to influence the direction of change, reduces them to mere pawns. When their attendance is poor and their contribution limited, staff blame them for their lack of interest, diverting attention away from the structural causes of the problem, namely entrenched power inequities between staff and students.

Such issues form the focus of Gruber and Trickett's (1987) evaluation of the school board of a high school committed to pupil and parent empowerment. The board included pupils, parents and teachers and was established as the school's central decision making body. Evaluation revealed, however, that parental and pupil participation was superficial and had little effect on the running of the school. Issues dealt with were trivial and decisions dominated by teachers.

Factors contributing to the board's failure related to power imbalances between parents, pupils and teachers. Teachers had considerably more power on the board than parents or pupils due to their greater responsibility for school funding and administration. In addition, inequalities of knowledge existed, with teachers' full time presence at school giving them access to more information about the school, while parents had only second hand knowledge of school activities, through their children. Inequalities in decision making processes also existed. Their

educational expertise meant that teachers were more likely to bring decisions to the board and had greater control over decision making.

Gruber and Trickett (1987) therefore pose similar questions regarding the true nature of empowerment to those posed by Serrano-Garcia (1984). According to Zimmerman's (1995) notion of psychological empowerment, parents and pupils were empowered by participation on the board. They gained in confidence and control (intra-personal component). They also developed relationships with teachers and learnt about the school's constraints and resources (interactional component). Their participation also had behavioural effects, allowing them to elect members onto the board and monitor the activities of staff. If empowerment includes real structural power to effect change, however, they were not empowered as pre-existing power relations between the three groups were not altered, and parents and pupils were not provided with sufficient resources to rise from their position at the bottom of the status hierarchy.

The debate concerning pre-existing power differences should be seen within the context of a broader critique of empowerment theory as over-emphasising psychological growth and individual development at the expense of broader power issues occurring at the organisational, community and societal level (Newborough, 1992 a and b; Riger, 1993 and Speer *et al.*, 1992). The present study, despite a focus on individual skills development and psychological growth, does not dismiss such a criticism, or adopt a purely individual position on empowerment. Instead it advocates the position adopted by Rich *et al.* (1995) and discussed in the previous chapter, namely that institutional empowerment follows the empowerment and skills development of the individuals who will participate in such wider change processes.

To be truly effective therefore, an empowerment intervention needs to achieve two things. Opportunities must be provided for skills and self development to allow for an increased sense of control. At the same time, organisational or societal restructuring must ensure an elevation in the formal status of the previously disempowered group. Seen in this way, the current study and recent attempts at institutional transformation constitute two halves of the same process. To be considered as empowerment in its purest form, both aspects are essential. The current attempt at the empowerment of students should therefore not be seen as a rejection of

institutional processes of change or endorsement of an individualist position, but rather should be seen within the context of institutional changes occurring simultaneously. Hence by participating in relatively short term processes of empowerment such as the one on which this study is based, students gain increased confidence, a greater sense of control and valuable skills, which can then be fed into wider, long term processes of institutional development. In this way, the individual and social perspectives on empowerment are not viewed as antagonistic, but rather are brought together as parts of the same process of transformation.

A further barrier to empowerment revealed in the above study relates to leadership. As discussed by Riger (1984), the commitment to an egalitarian structure by empowered organisations can prove problematic. On the above school board, formal hierarchical roles were resisted in an attempt to minimise power imbalances. This meant, however, that no one took responsibility for implementing decisions, thus contributing further to its failure. Hence a further paradox of empowerment is that strong leaders are needed to implement change, and yet the presence of leaders is assumed to imply a lack of empowerment and equality. Evidence suggests, however, that structureless organisations become so immersed in process that they achieve little (Gruber and Trickett, 1987 and Riger, 1984). Inspired leaders, however, can contribute much to the empowerment of the organisation as a whole, by advocating for the empowerment of others and encouraging their development (Maton and Salem, 1995).

The final barrier to empowerment I wish to discuss is the issue of skills development. As mentioned above (Kieffer, 1984), empowerment requires both psychological growth, with particular emphasis on such aspects as self esteem and feelings of control, as well as the development of skills such as assertiveness, time management and goal setting, all of which were developed in the current intervention.

According to Taylor and Burgess (1995) the development of autonomous, empowered learning requires training and orientation to specific skills. These skills are, however, often ignored as the provision of skills seems to imply that something is being given by someone in a superior position to those in an inferior, ignorant position. It is also often assumed that in a supportive environment, people automatically realise their potential for empowerment.

In evaluating Taylor and Burgess's (1995) social work course which sought to develop autonomous learning, however, students reported high anxiety as a result of being expected to take control of their learning without the appropriate skills development to achieve this:

> I actually wanted someone to point me in the right direction rather than say 'go and find out for yourself'...I felt I was in the sea really and the people around me were also floating in the sea and no one really knew what we were doing
>
> (student in Taylor and Burgess, 1995, p. 93).

Students therefore stressed the need for direct training in the requirements of autonomous learning as their previous educational experiences had not prepared them for this. Areas they requested training in included orientation to the specific expectations of lecturers, training in group discussion and time management skills.

It thus became clear that taking control of one's learning requires a major change to existing passive learning habits. Revisions were therefore made to the course, including the development of exercises on various aspects of autonomous learning and collaborative games to build co-operative relations and introduce students to group processes. (Similar games were used in the empowerment programme on which the current thesis is based.) Orientation lectures were also held regarding the conceptual and theoretical basis of autonomous learning. Further evaluation revealed that students responded positively to these changes and felt more confident regarding autonomous learning.

As other researchers have also found, (Capoor and Vakharia, 1995; McWhirter, 1991 and Serrano-Garcia, 1984) this study illustrates that empowerment involves more than a process of cognitive insights and enhanced self esteem. For most participants, empowerment involves new patterns of behaviour and a new set of skills. These should not, however, be taught in a didactic way, but rather should be facilitated in a participative manner, with participants selecting skills most appropriate to their particular needs. For this reason, Serrano-Garcia (1984), in the Puerto Rican project discussed above, developed skills through focussed participation in group meetings, rather than through formal training, which, she claims, would have emphasised the community's lack of skill and reliance on expert help.

The above studies thus reveal the application of empowerment theory to a wide range of educational contexts including preschool (Campos and Keatinge, 1984 in Cummins, 1986) school (Gruber and Trickett, 1987) and university (Maton and Salem, 1995 and Taylor and Burgess, 1995) settings, as well as to community and alternative forms of education (Lazarus, 1985 and "Participatory Learning", 1995). The final area for discussion is thus to outline how empowerment theory has informed the current study, before critically evaluating the theory and its application to education.

6.3. EMPOWERMENT THEORY - CRITIQUE AND CONCLUSIONS:

6.3.1. Empowerment theory as the theoretical foundation for the current study:

The present study seeks to extend academic development by developing an educational intervention that not only addresses students' cognitive and academic concerns but also their emotional ones. In particular, the study targets feelings of powerlessness and alienation, aiming to overcome the wide power imbalances between staff and students. Empowerment theory has provided a theoretical base, guiding principles and a methodology, to achieve this.

The theories and models discussed in the previous chapter provided the theoretical base that informs the current intervention. In particular, from the work of Zimmerman (1995), came a focus on empowerment as consisting of intra-personal, interactional and behavioural aspects. Hence students' academic empowerment was conceived of as consisting of aspects of control and motivation, group interaction and assertiveness, and active, autonomous study behaviour. Zimmerman also informed the current study by focussing attention on the need to measure empowerment processes (through focus group discussions in the current study) as well as the outcomes of an empowerment intervention (in this study in terms of academic performance and scores on the empowerment questionnaire). From the work of Kieffer (1984) came an awareness of empowerment as a process of skills and self development. Finally Rich *et al.* (1995) provided the assumption that the empowerment of individuals precedes organisational empowerment. Hence the present study is considered an essential first step before processes of institutional transformation can succeed and include students' meaningful participation.

The applications of empowerment theory to education discussed in this chapter provided a set of guiding principles to inform the current intervention design. In particular, aspects such as learning as a collaboration between teacher and students (Nyathi and Chikuhuhu, 1995), the value of nurturing group relations (Maton and Salem, 1995) and a teacher who mentors students (Cummins, 1986) were emphasised. The value of experiential forms of learning that increase intrinsic enjoyment of the subject (Bandura, 1997) was also highlighted.

Finally empowerment theory provided the present study with the methodology of action research. With its focus on collaboration and self reflection this is considered particularly suited to the evaluation of an empowerment intervention (Lazarus, 1985).

6.3.2. <u>Critique of empowerment theory:</u>

Drawing together the material from the last two chapters, a number of critical comments about empowerment theory can be made. Perhaps the strongest of these relates to the definition of empowerment. It has been criticised as political, ideological rhetoric with little practical or theoretical relevance, and as a wooly, unfocussed concept that is hard to operationalise: "Attempts to create theories of empowerment...are usually presented in global and vague terms that do not specify particular interventions or practical applications" (Mulvey, 1988, p. 80) and : "This is a badly misused construct that has become heavily infused with promotional hype, naive grandiosity, and virtually every brand of political rhetoric" (Bandura, 1997, p. 477).

Lack of definitional clarity occurs because of three main factors. Firstly the contextual nature of empowerment and its varied forms in different settings mediates against the development of a single, universally applicable empowerment construct. Secondly empowerment is a dynamic process that changes over time, again making it difficult to develop a global definition. Lastly empowerment is a value-laden term, with political and ideological undertones, which have been perceived by some as contributing to its vagueness and far removed from the supposed neutrality and objectivity of psychological constructs (Bandura, 1997).

Zimmerman (1995) responds to these criticisms by arguing that all science is value-laden and that empowerment, by articulating the values on which it is based, achieves greater clarity of definition than is true for many other constructs. He advocates viewing empowerment as a nomological network of linked constructs, with some components consistent across contexts and others unique to a particular context. Each researcher should therefore provide a clearly operationalised definition of empowerment specific to the context under study.

At the same time, the fuzzy, unfocussed nature of much empowerment research is acknowledged (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995 and Zimmerman *et al.*, 1992) with greater clarity of focus, less reliance on anecdotal evidence and more empirical testing needed. Specific issues warranting greater research include the contextual factors that either promote or inhibit empowerment, mediators of empowerment, and the impact of empowerment in terms of individual, organisational and community-wide outcomes.

A second criticism relates to the individual focus of much empowerment research. Although Rappaport (1987) includes a sense of personal control and actual democratic participation, in his definition of empowerment, research often conflates the two aspects (Newborough, 1992b). Both Zimmerman (1995) and Kieffer (1984), for example, focus on the development of psychological empowerment with little reference to organisational and community-wide forms of empowerment. A review of community psychological research between 1984 and 1988 also found widespread focus on issues related to individual adjustment and personality factors, suggesting that: "after 25 years community psychology retains signs of an individual-based, adjustment orientation" (Speer *et al.*, 1992, p. 208). Hence empowerment is operationalised in terms of personality factors like self efficacy or sense of control, excluding broader socio-political aspects of empowerment: "In the context of empowerment, if the focus of inquiry becomes not actual power but rather the sense of empowerment then the political is made personal and, ironically, the status quo is maintained" (Riger, 1993, p.281).

Reasons for the individualist focus of empowerment theory include the mainstream, clinical training of most community psychologists which predisposes them to an individual orientation (Newborough, 1992b) and the location of most empowerment theorists within either

academic or mental health settings where individualist mental health models predominate and where frequent contact with communities is rare (Mulvey, 1988). In addition, empowerment theory originated and flourishes in America, dominated by a cultural ideology of individualism.

Hence relatively few attempts have been made to explore the broader socio-political context within which empowerment occurs, or shift attention from psychological to organisational and community-wide forms of empowerment. Notable exceptions include Maton and Salem's (1995) analysis of the organisational features of empowerment settings, Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman, and Chavis's study (1990) of the physical and social contextual factors which predict participation in a neighbourhood block association and Cummins' (1986) analysis of minority and majority group power relations as impacting on minority pupils' sense of empowerment. Serrano-Garcia's study of a community development project in Puerto Rico is also representative of the Latin American school of social psychology, which, among other issues, focuses attention on the socio-political context of empowerment.

Much empowerment research has also been criticised for ignoring the relation between empowerment and social power. Empowerment is usually measured purely in terms of increased participation and a greater sense of control, rather than actual political power to access resources. Hence power is viewed apolitically and individualistically as referring to a sense of mastery with few writers debating whether an intervention that increases feelings of control without impacting on a community's access to resources really constitutes empowerment. Exceptions are Cummins (1986), Gruber and Trickett (1987) and Serrano-Garcia (1984), all of whom refer to the "illusion of empowerment" whereby individuals feel more in control yet within a context of pre-existing power differences. They also advocate the need to directly challenge unequal power relations in society for true empowerment to occur.

This issue is particularly relevant to the South African context, where power differences between social groups are particularly pronounced, and to this thesis, as discussed in section 6.2.5. To be truly effective, the current intervention therefore needs to be linked to a wider process of transformation to which empowered students can make meaningful contributions.

Feminist and cross-cultural writers (Lee, 1991; Mulvey, 1988 and Riger, 1993) have criticised empowerment theory for adopting an ethnocentric approach to the concepts of mastery and control, both Western, masculine values, at the expense of feminine and non-Western values of relatedness and sense of community. Feminist writers (Bowen, Bahrick and Ens, 1991 and McWhirter, 1991) place more emphasis on the collective aspects of empowerment than on the empowerment of individuals. They encourage newly empowered individuals to advocate for the empowerment of others and nurture their development, as a central goal of empowerment. The concept of "transformative power" is therefore used to refer to the use of power, not for selfish purposes, but rather to help in the empowerment of others. While the assumption that lack of power and control is psychologically damaging is a value-laden position, it should be remembered, however, that empowerment does not reject traditional values of commonality. Instead it seeks to strengthen existing values, including a sense of connectedness, while at the same time boosting people's sense of control. In addition, a number of writers (Chavis and Newborough, 1986; Heller, 1989; Maton and Rappaport, 1984 and Richard, 1995) have explicitly included a sense of community as central to their approach to empowerment.

The final criticism of empowerment theory I wish to discuss relates to its research designs and methods. According to two reviews (Lounsbury, Leader, Meares and Cook, 1980 and Novaco and Monahan, 1980) community psychological research published between 1970 and 1980 suffered from weak research designs and lack of methodological rigour. Small, unrepresentative samples and non-equivalent comparison groups were used and a narrow range of variables targeted. Research was often limited to the study of individual rather than community-wide processes, leading the authors to claim that community psychologists have sacrificed methodological rigour without sufficient gain in knowledge about social processes.

A more recent review (Speer *et al.*, 1992), focussing on the period 1984 - 1988, reported an increase in the use of correlations, field studies and single observation methods and a decrease in the use of control groups and experimental studies. These factors were interpreted not as reflecting continued methodological weakness, however, but rather as a result of the recent rise in the credibility of qualitative research, as discussed in section 6.1.2. Hence a more pragmatic approach is adopted, whereby researchers select methods that are most appropriate

to the context and issue being studied, rather than those that are empirically most rigorous (Patton, 1986 in Speer *et al.*, 1992). Community psychological research therefore needs to make use of multiple qualitative and quantitative methods, to suit the variables under study, ensuring that these allow for full community participation and at the same time meet the standards of rigour proposed by Hooking (1985), discussed above.

6.3.3. <u>Recommendations for future empowerment research:</u>

In response to the above criticisms, several authors (Hess, 1984; Perkins, 1995; Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995 and Zimmerman, 1995) have made recommendations regarding the direction future empowerment research and practice should take. Firstly it is argued that clearer definitions of empowerment should be adopted, focussing both on aspects applicable across multiple contexts and those unique to the particular context under study. Without such clarity of definition, empowerment is at risk of remaining a "warm and fuzzy, one-size-fits-all concept with no clear and consistent meaning" (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995, p. 572).

Secondly empowerment research must explore the multiple levels at which empowerment occurs to bridge the gap between empowerment as a psychological and an organisational and community-wide variable. More attempts should be made, for example, to identify the empowering features of settings such as schools, churches and self help groups, focussing both on features common across settings and those unique to a particular context, as in the work of authors such as Maton and Rappaport (1984) and Maton and Salem (1995). More attempts should also be made to link empowerment to the concept of social power, focussing on power relations between social groups as they impact on empowerment. This may require the integration of theories and methods from disciplines such as sociology and political science. European Social Psychology, with its focus on the impact of the social context and status hierarchy on identity, is of particular relevance here (Tajfel, 1981).

Thirdly, researchers should identify the qualitative and quantitative methods most ecologically sensitive to the study of empowerment in natural contexts, and most consistent with the value of community participation (Chavis *et al.*, 1983). More qualitative research is required to best

reflect the full range and detail of participants' experiences of empowerment processes, as well as more causal studies to measure outcomes of empowerment processes. Longitudinal studies are also required to explore the dynamic nature of empowerment as it varies over time.

Fourthly, more attempts should be made to study the dialectic nature of empowerment (Rappaport,1981). Studies of empowerment within religious contexts (Maton and Rappaport, 1984 and Maton and Salem, 1995) have suggested that empowerment leads to an interesting paradox whereby personal control is increased, but at the same time individuals give up personal forms of control to be guided by a higher power. Greater attention should therefore be paid to the relationship between personal and collective or spiritual control. Other dialectic aspects of empowerment warranting attention include the use of an egalitarian group structure as well as the need for order and leadership (Gruber and Trickett, 1987), the need for change as well as stability and also analysis of the costs and benefits of empowerment.

Lastly more attempts should be made to explore the negative effects of and limitations to empowerment. Several writers (Biegel, 1984; Couto, 1989; Hess, 1984 and Lazarus, 1985) allude to the fact that empowerment does not imply a limitless growth in power, but rather there are boundaries to empowerment. Attempts should therefore be made to identify these limitations and how they impact on an empowerment intervention.

Focussing specifically on the application of empowerment theory to the educational context, there are also several areas warranting further research. Firstly there appear to be few studies focussing on the empowerment of students in the tertiary sector, particularly within the South African context. Empowerment has much to offer as a valuable strategy to enable students to overcome the feelings of powerlessness and reliance on passive learning styles as discussed in chapter two, and yet has been ignored by local literature.

Secondly, many of the interventions mentioned in section 6.2 suffer from reliance on informal evaluation or no evaluation at all. Before the benefits of an empowering education will be widely accepted, rigorous evaluation of its impact is required. Evaluation should isolate the specific factors responsible for change and explore the link between empowering processes

and the outcomes thereof, especially in terms of academic performance. None of the studies mentioned above compare the effects of an empowering and a traditional education on academic performance.

Lastly I feel that the tentative work begun by Klecker and Loadman (1998), Short and Rinehart (1992) and Wilson (1993) in developing measures of empowerment, needs to be further developed. In order to allow for adequate comparison of the effects of empowering and traditional forms of education, reliable and valid measures of empowerment are needed.

6.3.4. <u>The current study as an extension to the field of empowerment:</u>

This thesis attempts to address some of the above recommendations and criticisms. Firstly the study is relevant to the local tertiary context, an area that has received little attention in the empowerment literature to date. An attempt was made to develop an empowerment-based tutorial intervention that would improve the academic performance of first year students in general, and black students in particular. This intervention adopted a holistic approach to students' difficulties, placing attention on some of the cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, campus ecological and socio-political adjustment difficulties discussed in chapter two. The intervention therefore sought to provide an alternative approach to the almost exclusively cognitive and linguistic approach to student development discussed in chapter three.

Secondly the study contributes to the work begun by Short and Rinehart (1992) and others in developing measures of educational empowerment. Drawing on studies of such linked constructs as locus of control, self esteem and learned helplessness, and measures in the area of teacher empowerment, a tentative measure of student empowerment will be developed. Attempts will be made to explore the strength of the relationship between aspects of the empowerment construct as well as the causal relationship between empowerment and some of the variables on which it depends.

Thirdly the study seeks to address the criticism by feminist writers that empowerment over-emphasises control at the expense of a sense of community. Group discussion, peer study

groups and nurturing relations within the group will form the basis for the tutorial programme, in an attempt to develop a sense of personal as well as collective forms of control.

Fourthly attempts will be made to rigorously evaluate the effects of the intervention, rather than rely on the informal evaluation methods of academic empowerment of earlier studies (Cummins, 1986 and Richard, 1995). Multiple qualitative and quantitative methods will be used in order to fully capture all aspects of students' experiences. In addition, attempts will be made to causally link empowering processes with the outcome of improved academic performance through a quasi-experimental comparison of students who participate in the programme, those who attended a course revision tutorial programme, and those who receive no additional tutorial help.

Finally the study will employ multiple research methods including questionnaires, quasi-experimentation, evaluation techniques and in-depth focus group discussion, both in order to capture the full extent of students' responses and to prevent criticisms of bias and lack of objectivity often the result of single qualitative measures (Lazarus, 1985). The method of action research will be used in the study as it is felt that this will be most consistent with the values of empowerment and in particular will allow for collaboration by students in the design and evaluation of the course.

CHAPTER SEVEN: METHOD:

7.1. RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY:

The primary goal of this research was to design and evaluate an intervention aimed at improving the academic performance of first year Psychology students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Observation of students and existing literature, as discussed in chapter three (Coleman, 1993; Lea, 1987 and Suen, 1983) led me to suspect high levels of powerlessness, alienation and learned helplessness among black students, faced with a style of learning their schooling had not prepared them for, and a dominant campus culture foreign to them. I therefore turned to empowerment theory to address the issue of powerlessness and thus inform the current intervention. A tutorial programme was selected as the most appropriate format for the intervention for two reasons. Firstly co-operative learning and peer support in a tutorial facilitates both cognitive and psycho-social development, and thus potentially addresses the adjustment difficulties discussed in chapter three, holistically (Grayson, 1994). Secondly a tutorial programme was chosen based on Rich *et al.*'s assumption that the empowerment of individuals precedes organisational empowerment (1995). The current intervention was therefore considered an essential first step before organisational transformation can succeed and students make meaningful contributions to these processes.

Based partly on the goal of improving academic performance and on the needs identified by participants, I decided that the programme should allow opportunities for course revision and the development of academic skills. A focus solely on these aspects, however, does not address black students' feelings of helplessness which may reduce them to a state of passivity in tutorials, resulting in them being unable to participate, and leading to an inappropriate expectation that the tutor will re-teach the course in a more accessible manner (Tisani, 1988).

The intervention thus synthesised concepts from academic development with those from community psychology, and especially empowerment theory, which provided a theoretical framework on which to base the intervention. Hence the intervention was conceptualised as a process of skills and self development, including intra-personal, interactional and study

behavioural components. All aspects of the programme were informed by the value of collaboration, with students participating in the design of the programme, selection of aims, strategies and content, leading of discussions and finally in the programme's evaluation. Empowerment theory also provided a set of practical strategies to inform the design of the intervention, as well as a participatory methodology of evaluation.

The study then sought to evaluate the efficacy of the empowerment programme both in terms of quantifiable academic performance in Psychology, and in terms of qualitative attitudes and perceptions. As discussed in chapter four, most academic development programmes rely either on informal evaluation, simplistic single method evaluation or no evaluation at all. The present study thus sought to extend work in this area by evaluating the effects of the empowerment intervention, using multiple qualitative and quantitative methods.

A secondary aim of the research was to design and test a measure of student academic empowerment that would hopefully discriminate between the empowerment levels of participants in the above programme and non-participants. The measure was also used to explore the components of student empowerment and the relationship between empowerment and other similar constructs. Further detail regarding the aims and hypotheses of both the empowerment programme and empowerment questionnaire are found in the following section.

7.2. AIMS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

Although the study was exploratory, thus mitigating against the a priori identification of fixed hypotheses, an attempt was made to identify general aims and specific hypotheses:

7.2.1. Aims:

7.2.1.1. To design, implement and evaluate a tutorial programme for first year Psychology students, based on the principles of empowerment.

7.2.1.2. To articulate a set of guiding principles for an education that empowers students to take control of their own learning and participate actively in the life of the university.

7.2.1.3. To develop a valid and reliable measure of empowerment, as applied to the context of tertiary student development in South Africa, and to explore whether any sub-factors of empowerment are measured by this instrument.

7.2.2. Hypotheses:

7.2.2.1. Empowerment Programme:

♦ Psychology 120 students who participate in an empowerment tutorial programme, do better on the Psychology 120 final examination and show an improved trend in academic performance over the semester than students who participate in a course content revision tutorial programme or those who do not attend any additional tutorial programme. Those who participate in the revision programme are expected to do better than those who do not participate in either programme, but not as well as those who participate in the empowerment programme.

♦ Students who participate in the empowerment programme are expected to consider the programme beneficial and to report increased feelings of control and academic empowerment.

7.2.2.2. Empowerment Questionnaire:

♦ Students who participate in the empowerment programme score higher on the empowerment questionnaire than those who do not participate.

♦ White students score higher on the empowerment questionnaire than do black students.

- Students who scored 68% or above on the Psychology 110 examination score higher on the empowerment questionnaire than those with who scored below 68% on the Psychology 110 examination.

- Students who participate in sports, societies and other extra-mural activities score higher on the empowerment questionnaire than those who don't.

- No gender difference in scores on the empowerment questionnaire is expected.

7.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The methodology chosen as most appropriate for this study, was action research, as discussed in the previous chapter. This was selected for several reasons. Firstly it is a highly participative methodology, requiring community and researcher collaboration in developing solutions to problems (Lazarus, 1985). In this project students collaborated in the design of the course and the programme's evaluation. The current study can thus be considered an example of level four participation as outlined in section 6.1.1. of the previous chapter (Chavis *et al.*, 1983).

Action research was also selected as it advocates the development of competencies and the ability of the community to generate its own solutions. It is thus an empowering methodology well suited to a project aimed at overcoming feelings of powerlessness and passivity.

Action research is also a reflexive method (Winter, 1987) based on a spiral model of research, consisting of a continuous cycle of planning, action, observation and reflection (Hooking, 1985). At the end of each tutorial students reflected on the content covered and suggested alterations to the future direction of the programme to meet their changing needs. This action-reflection cycle is particularly appropriate to the design and evaluation of a new intervention.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the bringing together of theoretical and applied elements in action research was considered particularly appropriate to a project which aims both to develop a measure of academic empowerment and design a practical tutorial intervention.

For ease of analysis and reporting the two sections of the study will be dealt with separately. The first involves the design, implementation and evaluation of the empowerment programme. The second component focusses on the design and administration of the measure of student empowerment (referred to as the empowerment questionnaire).

7.4. EMPOWERMENT TUTORIAL PROGRAMME:

7.4.1. Research methodology:

This component of the project, while still adhering to the tenets of action research, used a programme evaluation methodology. This involves the systematic investigation of the merit of an intervention, achieved by identifying its goals and objectives, analysing participants' performance and then determining the match between goals and performance (Agar, 1988). Quantitative approaches to evaluation seek to evaluate directly measurable outcomes through objective means. The qualitative paradigm is more interpretive and focuses on evaluation of attitudes, goals and cognitive states (Patton, 1982 in Agar, 1988).

Traditionally these two approaches have been considered mutually exclusive. Agar (1988) and others (Patton, 1982 and Shulman, 1986, both in Agar, 1988) however, argue that the most appropriate strategy for educational evaluation, is a multifaceted one, to provide fuller detail of the phenomenon under study. As multiple interacting factors combine to influence the outcome of educational interventions, particularly in this country (Agar, 1992), complex evaluation strategies are needed. These should assess such aspects as attitudes and values associated with the programme, ongoing development, and the programme's final impact. A multi-factorial approach is therefore adopted in this study to gain a full understanding of the impact of empowerment on academic performance and on students' attitudes to their studies.

As mentioned in previous chapters, few attempts have been made to systematically evaluate academic development initiatives in South Africa (Mhlane, 1991). This study thus seeks to extend

knowledge in this area. Evaluation is usually limited to qualitative forms of evaluation, such as interviews or rating scales, which suffer from data bias (Cowen and Gesten, 1980) or are unable to provide hard evidence for the success of ADPs (Mhlane, 1991). A few quantitative comparisons of academic performance have been made but these generally fail to find differences between the performance of ADPs participants and non-participants (Agar, 1988). Lack of evaluation of academic development is partly due to its emphasis on service rather than research and lack of agreement regarding criteria for determining the success of an intervention. ADPs are also usually context specific, making it difficult to compare outcomes across programmes (Agar, 1988).

Holistic models of evaluation that focus both on academic performance and on students' attitudes and perceptions are therefore needed. Such approaches are advocated by Mhlane (1991) in the guidelines he proposes for the evaluation of ADPs. He argues for the development of a national model of ADP evaluation which should adopt an action research methodology and evaluate activities on an ongoing basis. Students attending ADPs should participate both in designing interventions to meet their needs and in evaluating their efficacy. In addition to evaluation of student responses, effects of academic development on academic performance should also be a key factor evaluated. Attempts were made in the present study to meet these guidelines.

7.4.2. Research design:

In keeping with Agar's (1988) multifaceted strategy for educational evaluation, the evaluation of the empowerment programme had a number of components. Firstly the programme's impact on academic performance was evaluated using a quasi-experimental method with type of intervention as the independent variable and final mark in Psychology 120 as the dependent measure. The independent variable existed at three levels. The performance of Psychology 120 students who attended the empowerment programme in 1994 (group A) was compared with that of those who attended an academic development tutorial programme in 1993, with a focus solely on course revision and study skills (group B), and with a group of 1994 Psychology 120 students who chose not to attend additional tutorials at all (group C). Students in group C were, however, matched with those in group A for race and class of pass in Psychology 110. The tightest research design would have involved one pool of subjects randomly assigned to the

three groups, as in a clinical trial experiment (Leary, 1991). This would, however, have been unethical as students in group C would have been denied help which could have improved their academic performance. A tighter design would also have been achieved had I compared three groups of 1994 students, with one group participating in the empowerment programme, one in the revision tutorials and remaining students forming the control group. This would, however, also have been unethical should it be found that one of the two tutorial programmes had a greater impact on students' academic performance than the other, as some students would have been offered a less beneficial intervention. For these reasons I used a quasi-experimental method. This method involves the comparison of naturally occuring groups, with pre-existing differences, and is used where random assignment of subjects to an experimental and control condition would be considered unethical (Leary, 1991). I thus compared the empowerment programme, open to all 1994 Psychology 120 students, with pre-existing results from the revision programme, which had been offered to all 1993 Psychology 120 students.

Because pre-existing groups were used, it could be argued that the three groups were not initially equivalent, making it impossible to attribute changes in academic performance to the intervention used, rather than to contaminating factors like race, differences in academic ability, motivation levels or differences in the Psychology 120 course from 1993 to 1994. To reduce the effect of such factors subjects in group C were matched to those in group A in terms of race and class of pass in the Psychology 110 course. The Psychology 120 course did not vary much from 1993 to 1994, with the same topics covered in both years and the same textbook used. The same examination format and class mark composition was also used in both years and similar mean final marks were obtained by the class (54% in 1993 and 55% in 1994). This suggests that any differences in academic performance between groups A and B were unlikely to be the result of differences between the 1993 and 1994 courses.

The second component of the evaluation was qualitative, consisting of an evaluation questionnaire completed by participants at the end of the empowerment programme. This included rating scales and open ended questions evaluating various aspects of the programme.

Finally four single session focus group discussions were held with four groups of participants to gain qualitative data of a more in-depth nature than was possible in the above questionnaire and to evaluate students' opinions in a group setting (Dawson, Manderson and Tallo, n.d.). Each

group comprised between six and eight students from each of the four empowerment tutorial groups, in the same racial and gender proportions as existed in the whole sample, to ensure that all views were represented. Groups were led by an independent facilitator. Discussions explored students' attitudes towards the tutorial programme and particularly the focus on empowerment.

7.4.3. <u>Intervention Design:</u>

7.4.3.1. **Empowerment programme:**

Based on the ecological principle of adaptation, namely that the unique nature of a system demands the development of skills specific to that context (Trickett *et al.*, 1972 in Rappaport, 1977), a generalised definition of empowerment was rejected in favour of one tailored to the context under study. Thus, for the purposes of this study, academic empowerment was defined as a process of psychological growth whereby students gain an increased sense of control over their studies and participate as empowered human beings within the university. Drawing from the work of Zimmerman (1995) academic empowerment was thought to include intra-psychic aspects of control, self esteem and motivation, interpersonal aspects of assertiveness, co-operation and an understanding of the university as a socio-political institution, and aspects of study behaviour such as active and autonomous learning and effective management of study time.

This intervention thus adopted an individual level of intervention, based on the assumption that students must first become empowered as individuals (Rich *et al.*, 1995) to participate in wider, organisational processes of empowerment. Despite its individual focus, the intervention sought to impact on other levels of the university system, based on the ecological principle of interdependence (Trickett *et al.*, 1972 in Rappaport, 1977). Students were thus made aware of the socio-political factors in and outside the university which impacted on the expression of their empowerment. They also used role play and research activities to apply some of the empowerment strategies and techniques developed in the programme, to their other courses, their interactions in residence and other aspects of university life.

Based on the theories, models and applications reviewed in the previous two chapters, a set of guiding principles was then developed, on which the intervention was based.

7.4.3.1.1.   Value of collaboration:

Participation was explicitly introduced at the first meeting, as the core value, which would inform all aspects of the programme (Prilleltensky, 1991). Students collaborated in the design of the programme, by determining its aims and selecting issues to be addressed. The first stage of any community intervention should always be a thorough needs assessment (Biegel, 1984 and Richard, 1995) to lay the foundation for community collaboration and ensure that the intervention meets the community's needs. Due to the limited time available for the programme, an in-depth needs assessment was not possible. The first session, however, was devoted to individual, small group and large group identification and prioritisation of needs.

As a symbol of the programme's participatory design, a contract was signed between tutor and students, indicating acceptance of the agreed upon aims and content areas, and articulating the mutual dependence of both parties on one another for the programme's success. Thus students stated that they would make every effort to attend classes, contribute to discussions, and bring handouts to class every week. In return they could expect that I would prepare adequately for every session, be flexible to the specific needs of students as they arose during the semester and adapt the programme accordingly, provide weekly revision exercises and make myself available for individual consultation. (A copy of the contract is included in Appendix A).

Collaboration was emphasised in the teaching methodology, which emphasised experiential forms of learning, including group discussion, role play and practical research tasks. Students were also made to assume responsibility for finding their own solutions from within the group, as advocated by Lloyd (1987), rather than passively relying on me to re-teach the course.

Finally, students collaborated in the programme's evaluation. Based on the method of action research (Winter, 1987) and the ecological principle of adaptation (Trickett *et al.*, 1972 in Rappaport, 1977), evaluation was not limited to the end of the programme, but rather the

programme was assessed weekly and the direction changed, where necessary. After being introduced to the principles and methods of evaluation research, students also participated by determining areas to be evaluated and writing evaluation questions.

7.4.3.1.2. Boost existing competencies:

The programme also sought to encourage existing competencies, instead of focussing on areas of deficit. This was consistent with the ecological principle of cycling of resources (Trickett *et al.*, 1972 in Rappaport, 1977), and is one of community psychology's core values (Heller *et al.*, 1984). Students were therefore asked in the needs assessment to identify current areas of strength which could assist them to succeed, before identifying problem areas. To aid in this process, they answered a short questionnaire rating their approach to various aspects of their study behaviour, with answers plotted on a graph of strengths and weaknesses. Strategies were also used to increase students' sense of mastery, Each session began with concepts and ideas familiar to students, and self assessed, revision exercises were frequently used to allow students to monitor their performance and increase their likelihood of success. These strategies were adapted from the Science Foundation Programme, described in chapter four (Grayson, 1994). The Jigsaw Technique of co-operative learning was also used for revising difficult sections of the course (Aronson, Stephan, Sikes, Blaney and Snapp, 1978). In small groups participants were given responsibility for different sections of material, which they mastered, and then taught to the rest of their group, thus increasing their feelings of expertise.

7.4.3.1.3. A sense of community within the group:

A number of authors emphasise the value of nurturing relations within the group and a sense of community, to an empowerment process (Kieffer, 1984; McWhirter, 1991 and Richard, 1995). A range of strategies were therefore used to develop a strong sense of group identity and allow for friendship formation.

For the first four sessions students wore name tags and were encouraged to sit next to different people at every session, to get to know one another. Icebreaker games were also used

to encourage a relaxed atmosphere and a sense of familiarity. Every session began with a group activity designed to increase enjoyment of the course and encourage co-operation. All sessions used co-operative learning techniques, with material discussed in small groups and then fed back to the rest of the class. Participants were also encouraged to form peer study groups of their own. The Jigsaw Technique (Aronson *et al.*, 1978) was also used to increase a sense of co-operation and dependence on the other members of a group.

7.4.3.1.4. Tutor as facilitator and mentor:

To further encourage collaboration and a sense of community, the tutor adopted a role as facilitator rather than expert. I, therefore restricted myself to facilitation of discussion, and encouraged students to find answers to questions from within their groups, rather than relying on me to re-teach the course. Drawing from the work of Kieffer (1984), I acted as a mentor and ally to students, providing material and emotional support. I therefore made myself available to students outside of the weekly meetings, for individual and group consultation, providing support regarding such concerns as financial aid, registration, career choice or choice of subjects, examination stress, or matters of a personal nature. Based on Maton and Salem's discussion of empowered organisations (1995) I also inspired students' growth, by explicitly encouraging them and communicating to them my confidence in their ability to succeed.

7.4.3.1.5. Empowerment as a process of self and skills development:

A number of authors define empowerment as a process of both self growth and skills development (Lazarus, 1985; Maton and Salem, 1995 and Taylor and Burgess, 1995). Aspects of the self that were nurtured included feelings of control and competence, increased confidence and elevated self esteem. This was achieved in several ways. Opportunities for discussion and group activities were provided, thus boosting confidence, while the development of friendships elevated self esteem. Course revision and self assessment allowed for an increased sense of mastery and control. The tutor's role as mentor and friend, also encouraged self development both during the weekly sessions and in individual consultations.

At the same time, students developed skills in such areas as assertiveness, time management and active learning. Serrano Garcia (1984) cautions against teaching skills in a didactic manner which widens power imbalances between expert and community. Instead skills were developed experientially through role play, research activities and reflection thereon and discussion.

7.4.3.1.6. Opportunities to develop intrinsic enjoyment of Psychology:

According to Bandura (1997) intrinsic enjoyment of a task increases the effort put into it, and hence the likelihood of success. Several strategies were used to increase students' enjoyment of Psychology, including interesting practical tasks completed in groups at the beginning of each session, related to the lecture module being taught. To illustrate the topic of perception, for example, students interpreted stereoscopic pictures, while to demonstrate divergent and creative thinking, groups brain-stormed the uses for a detergent bottle. Other strategies included the use of role play and tasks involving independent research performed outside of the sessions.

The above strategies thus combined to create a style of interaction characterised by student collaboration and ownership of the programme, and a tutor who acted as facilitator of discussion and mentor, providing emotional and material support and inspiring students' growth. The teaching methodology emphasised experiential forms of learning and discussion, seeking to increase students' confidence and enjoyment of Psychology. Course revision exercises and readings increased students' likelihood of success and allowed for experiences of mastery. While these strategies clearly focus on individual forms of empowerment, students discussed structural and socio-political features of the university which impacted on their empowerment and applied what they had learnt to other contexts, through applied exercises, thus ensuring that the programme impacted on other levels of the university system as well.

7.4.3.2. Course revision tutorial programme:

This programme was based on the same philosophical assumptions as other academic development tutorial interventions, discussed in chapter four, section 4.3.2 (Lloyd, 1987 and Tisani, 1988). Hence students' academic difficulties were perceived as caused by a range of

cognitive, meta-cognitive and linguistic difficulties due to a disadvantaged school background (Bulman, 1996). Particular emphasis was placed on my perceptions of their lack of critical thinking and deep level learning skills (Barnsley, 1992). These concerns were thought to be best addressed by tutorials focussing on course revision and the teaching of academic skills from within the context of the discipline (Bulman, 1996). It was also hoped that students' psycho-social concerns would be indirectly addressed through the use of co-operative learning strategies (Tinto, 1989, in University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992).

The programme thus consisted of weekly 45 minute course revision sessions for the duration of a semester. Students brought queries related to the lecture module currently being taught and these would be answered by the tutor. Six academic skills were also addressed, namely goal setting, note taking, reading the textbook, summarising techniques and answering paragraph and multiple choice examination questions. Weekly multiple choice and paragraph exercises were provided and there was some opportunity for small group discussion of these.

7.4.4. Subjects:

Seventy four Psychology 120 students volunteered for the empowerment programme. Of these, 65 completed the evaluation questionnaire (nine students did not attend the tutorial class when the questionnaire was completed). A quota sample of 27 of these 74 participants was selected for the focus group discussions.

The empowerment programme group had the following racial and gender composition:

Table 7.1.   Composition of empowerment programme group by race and gender (group A)

	BLACK:	WHITE:	INDIAN/ COLOURED:	TOTAL:
MALE:	21	4	2	27
FEMALE:	33	10	4	47
TOTAL:	54	14	6	74

The mean age of the 65 participants who completed the evaluation questionnaire was 22, with ages ranging from 17 to 45. Fifty eight of these students were in first year, six were second year students and one was in third year. Forty three students had a Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.) matriculation, twelve had an Education Department matriculation (e.g. N.E.D.), five had a House of Delegates' matriculation, four had completed the Joint Matriculation Board examination, and one student had a Cambridge matriculation certificate. Of the 65 students who completed the evaluation questionnaire, 16 attended between four and eight times, 24 attended almost every week, and 25 attended all thirteen sessions.

113 students attended the revision tutorials in 1993 (group B). The larger number of students who volunteered for this programme than the empowerment programme could be due to one of two reasons. Firstly more students registered for Psychology 120 in 1993 (493 students) than 1994 (434 students). Secondly the possibility exists that the course revision programme appeared more attractive to students due to its primary focus on course revision. Group B had the following racial and gender composition:

Table 7.2.   Composition of revision tutorial group by race and gender (group B)

	BLACK:	WHITE:	INDIAN/ COLOURED:	TOTAL:
MALE:	26	6	4	36
FEMALE:	30	29	18	77
TOTAL:	56	35	22	113

The academic abilities of the students in groups A and B varied greatly, with students' final mark in the first semester Psychology 110 course ranging from below 40% to above 75%. Mean Psychology 110 final marks for the two groups were similar although group B received a slightly higher mean score than group A:

Table 7.3.   Number of students with Psychology 110 final marks in each of the pass categories in group A (empowerment programme.) and B (revision programme)

	GROUP A (N = 65):	GROUP B (N = 113):
ABOVE 75%:	1	7
68% - 74%:	5	12
60% - 67%:	9	20
50% - 59%:	21	48
40% - 49%:	23	17
BELOW 40%:	6	9
MEAN FINAL MARK:	51.76	56.46

The control group (C) consisted of 64 students from the 1994 Psychology 120 class who did not participate in the empowerment programme, matched with those in group A in terms of race and academic ability (measured as class of pass in the Psychology 110 course). Due to the large number of black students attending the empowerment programme and the comparatively smaller number in the rest of the class, only 44 black students from the rest of the class could be matched with those in group A and included in the control group, resulting in a sample of 64 students in group C rather than 74. Hence it was not possible to include a random sample of black students from the rest of the class in group C and therefore these students may have shared certain characteristics which may have contaminated results. The 64 students in Group C had the following composition, and a mean final mark for Psychology 110, of 50.10.

Table 7.4.   Composition of control group by race and gender (group C)

	BLACK:	WHITE:	INDIAN/ COLOURED:	TOTAL:
MALE:	18	5	-	23
FEMALE:	26	9	6	41
TOTAL:	44	14	6	64

7.4.5. <u>Materials:</u>

To evaluate students' attitudes towards the empowerment programme and the perceived effect it had on their studies, the following two qualitative measures were used:

7.4.5.1.   Evaluation questionnaire:

An evaluation questionnaire was designed, and administered during the last session of the empowerment programme. To ensure collaboration, time was spent in a previous session discussing the nature and purpose of evaluation and the design of evaluation questionnaires. Students then selected areas to be evaluated and assisted with the writing of questions. The questionnaire was piloted on five black students to assess the length of time required to complete the questionnaire by students whose mother tongue was not English. They took between thirty and forty minutes to complete the task, and so one 45 minute session was set aside for students to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire contained a mixture of rating scales and open-ended questions (see Appendix B) and began with a demographic section requesting age, sex, race, year of study and matriculation examination authority. Students were also asked how often they had attended the tutorial programme and the class of mark they had obtained for Psychology 110.

Students' attitudes towards six aspects of the programme were then evaluated, namely the content covered, the usefulness of handouts, attitudes towards group discussion and the teaching methodology, the focus on empowerment and finally a general section. This concerned whether the programme had met students' expectations, the perceived effect of attending on their academic performance as well as suggestions for changes to the programme.

7.4.5.2.   Focus Group Discussion Guide:

Four focus group discussions, each lasting approximately an hour, were held with participants from the four tutorial groups. These discussions focussed firstly on students' opinions about

the programme, specifically in terms of perceived gains and/or losses and useful and/or useless aspects of the course. Secondly the programme's aims were discussed, followed by discussion of the empowerment focus and whether this had had any impact on students. Fourthly the usefulness of handouts was explored followed by a discussion of the relevance of the content areas to students' individual needs. Finally students were asked for suggestions to improve the success of the programme. A copy of the discussion guide is found in Appendix C.

7.4.6. <u>Procedure:</u>

The empowerment programme consisted of weekly 45-minute sessions, over the 13 weeks of the second semester. The programme was advertised to all Psychology 120 students through posters and a five minute verbal presentation during a Psychology 120 lecture. It was marketed as relevant to students of all academic abilities wishing to improve their performance, gain greater enjoyment of Psychology and engage in a process of personal growth and development.

Four tutorial groups were established each ranging from 15 to 23 participants. All groups were facilitated by myself and covered the same content. Students of different races were allocated to groups roughly according to the proportions in the total sample (70% black, 20% white and 10% Indian and Coloured students). Larger numbers of black than white students in every group hopefully mitigated against black students feeling intimidated by their more articulate peers as described in chapter four (4.3.2) (Tisani, 1988). All classes were held in the Psychology department seminar room, a large room consisting of tables and chairs arranged in a semicircle to facilitate discussion, a chalkboard and an overhead projector and screen.

As described above the programme began with an assessment of needs that students hoped to address during the programme. These were identified individually, then shared in small groups to determine commonalities and finally discussed in plenary and ranked. Needs were remarkably similar across all groups and included the following in order of priority:

♦ Revision of difficult course content and access to revision exercises
♦ Time management
♦ Summarising the textbook

- Setting goals for one's studying
- Overcoming test anxiety
- Memorising skills
- Independent learning
- Improved confidence over one's studies
- Access to additional readings relevant to the lecture course

Students also referred to low motivation due to past failures, lack of confidence and loss of control over their studies. My research goal of exploring the impact of empowerment on academic performance was then discussed as being consistent with many of student's academic needs and with the above issues of control, confidence and motivation. Through a process of negotiation it was agreed that the course would adopt an empowerment methodology while still addressing the academic needs identified above and ensuring adequate course revision.

Based on the first session's discussion a set of aims and strategies was drawn up by the group, expressed in written form by me and presented to students at the second session for agreement. Three programme aims were identified:

- To equip students with the skills, strategies and knowledge of course content to succeed in the Psychology 120 course
- To empower students to assume responsibility for their study behaviour
- To encourage development of all aspects of the self including academic, psychological and social development to enable students to adapt to the university context.

It was agreed that the above aims would be achieved in the programme by adopting the following strategies of teaching and learning:

- Empowerment:
  This was viewed as a process of skills and self development. Opportunities would be provided for self growth and development in such aspects as confidence, self esteem

and a sense of mastery. At the same time activities would be structured to allow students to develop skills in the strategies and techniques needed to behave in an empowered manner and adopt an active, autonomous learning style.

- Collaboration:
  Student ownership would be emphasised throughout the programme, including its design, teaching methods and evaluation.

- Boosting strengths:
  Emphasis was placed on extending students' existing strengths rather than correcting deficits in order to build a positive self image and a sense of mastery over one's studies.

- Experiential, group-based forms of learning:
  Active, experiential methods of learning would be emphasised including group discussion, role play, research activities and practical tasks, with the tutor acting as facilitator of these activities rather than as expert.

- A sense of community:
  Attempts would be made to build a strong group identity and provide opportunities for co-operative learning and the formation of friendships.

The content covered thus sought to unite three elements - the principles and practices of empowerment as applied to the university context, a set of skills identified by students in the needs assessment as crucial to their academic success, and revision of course content. A session was thus devoted to the above skills identified in the needs assessment, explored within the context of the current lecture content. Each skill was related to the theme of empowerment which also formed the specific focus for three sessions, thus integrating empowerment, course content and academic skills. To ensure a participatory methodology five minutes was spent at the end of every session reflecting on the present session and considering the following topic, and making changes to the syllabus as needed. This also ensured that changes to students' needs, as a result of the dynamic nature of empowerment, were integrated into the programme.

Discussion ideas, activities and exercises used in the programme were drawn from a wide range of sources covering the following topics:

♦ Academic skills training (Alschuler, Tabor and McIntyre, 1971; Barnes, 1992; Biggs, 1987; Boud, 1981; Entwistle, 1992; Marshall and Rowland, 1981; Spaulding, 1992 and Wong, 1994).

♦ Assertiveness training (Fodor, 1992 and Willis and Daisley, 1995)

♦ Life and social skills training (Bond, 1986 and Hopson and Scally, 1980 a, b and c)

♦ Empowerment training (Blank, 1982; Siccone and Canfield, 1993 and Scott and Jaffe, 1991)

♦ Co-operative learning (Grossman, 1994)

The specific content covered in the programme was as follows:

7.4.6.1.   Needs assessment and introduction to the concept of empowerment:

Students' existing strengths and weaknesses related to their academic success, and their academic needs were identified, as discussed above. Students were also briefly introduced to the concept of academic empowerment as an individually based concept. This was, however, also located within a multilayer system including individual learning resources, discipline and departmental resources, resources related to their other disciplines, campus-wide resources and resources outside the university, all of which impact on their academic success.

7.4.6.2.   Empowerment - definitions and theoretical base:

In this session a common understanding of empowerment as related to academic success was discussed. Empowerment was not discussed purely as a theoretical construct but rather students also tested their understanding of the construct experientially through imagined scenarios, role play and real behaviours. They identified a set of scenarios, for example, related in some way to differences in power between participants, that they might encounter within the university and assessed how an empowered and a disempowered student might respond to each one. These

scenarios were used as the basis for an analysis of the advantages to behaving in an empowered way, as well as the obstacles and disadvantages to empowerment. Students were also given a short research activity to complete during the following two weeks. After identifying several situations that they had experienced at university, where they had felt powerless or not in control, they attempted to act on two of these in an empowered manner. They then reflected on their level of success, the advantages to acting in this manner and the obstacles they encountered. To reduce unrealistic expectations of success, they were warned that they may fail to achieve their goal but would at least gain insight into the obstacles to empowered behaviour. The results of this activity were discussed in the fifth session.

7.4.6.3. Goal setting:

Students were introduced to goal setting as an initial step to identifying academic difficulties and generating solutions, and thus an essential part of empowered studying. In groups, they then set goals for one of the lectures of the current Psychology 120 module, with every student responsible for a different section, thus using the Jigsaw technique described above (Aronson *et al.*, 1978). These were shared in the following session providing students with a complete set of specific goals and objectives for the whole module.

7.4.6.4. Independent learning:

Students used the set of goals developed above to identify and rank module related difficulties. The most common of these were then discussed, thus bringing together the learning of an academic skill with revision of course content. Answers to problems were sought from within the student group rather than relying on me to re-teach the module. Students were also introduced to the concept of active, independent learning during this session.

7.4.6.5. Assertiveness:

This session began with a discussion of the research activity given in session two. Discussions illustrated that one obstacle to empowered behaviour faced by most of the

students was a lack of assertiveness and confidence. This session therefore focussed on empowered behavioural techniques including taking responsibility for a problem, concretising the problem, determining whether the problem is shared by others and gaining their support, identifying alternative solutions and behaving assertively. Students roleplayed some of the scenarios identified in session two, in pairs, with a student observer noting how successfully various strategies of assertiveness were used. A second research activity was then given for completion during the week. Students assessed how assertively they thought they would respond to scenarios involving people ranging in familiarity from their family to their lecturers. They then selected one academic situation where they would like to behave more assertively and sought to act on this, again reflecting on their success and the obstacles faced.

7.4.6.6. Time management:

This was discussed as a way of increasing control over and organisation of one's studies, and thus was part of an empowered learning strategy. Students assessed their current use of time and then explored several time management strategies. They then developed a study schedule for the coming week and were asked to reflect on how effective they found this.

7.4.6.7. Summarising skills:

Students explored several strategies for summarising textbook material, including spider diagrams, and category grids, and practised these using material taken from the current lecture module. Here too, small groups took responsibility for different sections so that at the end of the class a summary of the entire module had been developed.

7.4.6.8. Empowerment - macro-level institutional influences:

The session began by exploring the limitations of empowerment as an intra-psychic variable and the need for academic empowerment to combine change in individual attitudes with change at the level of departments and institutional functioning. A model of academic empowerment was developed, within the context of the Psychology department, the university,

the tertiary education system, and broader social, political, economic and cultural systems, with the impact of every level on empowerment discussed. Students then focussed on the level of departmental structures, exploring in groups how structural features within the Psychology department helped them to as well as hindered them from expressing empowered behaviour patterns. Critical suggestions for how the department could more effectively empower its students to strive for success were also made, at the level of course content, teaching and assessment methods and staff-student relationships. These suggestions were reported to the department through the staff-student liaison forum, a body of class representatives and course co-ordinators, focussing on course evaluation and staff-student relationships.

7.4.6.9.   Empowerment - recommendations for an empowering education:

This session drew together the previous discussions on empowerment and discussed the research activities given to students, expanding on the benefits of and obstacles to empowerment, in the light of their practical experiences. In groups students then made recommendations concerning the features of an empowering education. These formed the basis for the guidelines developed in chapter ten, section 10.5.

7.4.6.10   Tools for maximising memory recall:

The lecture module on memory processes was used as the basis for a discussion on maximising recall of learnt material. Memory aids were discussed including the use of flash cards, spider diagrams and mnemonics, as well as visual, auditory and kinesthetic study aids. Differences between deep and surface level processing of information and their link to active, empowered and passive, disempowered learning styles, were also discussed.

7.4.6.11.   Overcoming test anxiety:

The issue of classical and operant conditioning was used for a discussion of examination anxiety as a conditioned response to the examination and its associated stimuli, thus linking academic skills and course content. Test anxiety was considered to often be the result of

inadequate preparation and poor self confidence, thus linking taking control of one's studies, and an accompanying decrease in anxiety. Coping strategies were then developed in groups and discussed in plenary. Part of this session was also used for revising the Psychology 120 practicals, a section students found somewhat fragmented and difficult to integrate with the lectures. A group summary was therefore developed, highlighting the objectives of each practical, indicating key issues to be learnt and relating each one textbook material.

7.4.6.12.   Introduction to programme evaluation:

The beginning of this session concluded the discussion of practicals. The rest of this session was used to introduce students to programme evaluation to allow them to make an informed contribution to the current evaluation. Differences between formative and summative evaluation were discussed as well as various evaluation techniques including questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. Students then determined areas to be evaluatedand wrote some of the questions for the evaluation.

7.4.6.13.   Evaluation:

In the final session students completed the evaluation questionnaire.

To increase the time available, students were given three sets of handouts at every session to complete at home. One of these was an interesting reading related to the lecture module being taught. One handout had a set of multiple choice and paragraph questions on the current lecture module, to meet students' need for course content revision. Answers to these exercises could be handed in for written comment. The third handout provided notes relevant to each of the skills discussed in the tutorial. See Appendix D for samples of the handouts.

Students completed the evaluation questionnaire during the last session. Before they began, they were thanked for their participation in the programme. They were asked to respond to the questions as honestly as possible, as their responses could lead to the improvement of the programme. They were also reminded that all answers would be anonymous. They were asked

to complete the rating scales by circling one of the numbers on the scale indicating the strength of their agreement or disagreement with every statement. They were also encouraged to answer all of the open-ended questions. Students were given the entire 45-minute session to complete the questionnaire and all managed to do so in the allotted time.

A sample of eight students was then chosen from all four tutorial groups, for the focus group discussions, by placing all group members' names in a hat and drawing out eight names. A time to meet was made to suit the students. Groups were held in English and led by an independent facilitator who had had no prior contact with the students. All groups lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. Discussions were tape recorded and transcribed, before being subject to content analysis. At the beginning of each discussion, participants were thanked for their time and reminded that all responses would be anonymous.

7.5. EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONNAIRE:

7.5.1. Research methodology and design:

The development and administration of the academic empowerment questionnaire (as distinguished from the evaluation questionnaire) was consistent with the thesis's action research methodology in that a reflexive approach between action and theory was adopted (Winter, 1987). Observations from the empowerment programme and current empowerment theory (especially Kieffer, 1984; Prilleltensky, 1991; Rappaport, 1987 and Zimmerman 1990a) were incorporated in the design of the questionnaire and findings from the questionnaire were able to influence the future direction of an empowerment tutorial programme.

The questionnaire explored several aspects of the nature of empowerment. Firstly it sought to provide an initial, tentative measure of academic empowerment among students and indicate the reliability of such a measure. Secondly it explored the strength of the relationship between various aspects of the academic empowerment construct such as locus of control, learned helplessness and motivation. Finally the questionnaire was used to explore the relationship

between empowerment and five independent variables, namely participation in the empowerment programme, race and gender, class of pass in Psychology 110, and participation in sports teams, clubs or societies.

7.5.2. Subjects:

Subjects for this part of the research were all first year students who were present at two Psychology 120 lectures (lectures are repeated due to large student numbers and so both halves of the class were sampled). The sample could not be considered truly representative of first year Psychology students as no attempt was made to include students who chose not to attend lectures. (148 of the 434 students registered for this course were not present on the day data was collected). Two hundred and eighty six students were included in the sample, of whom 66 were participants in the empowerment programme and 220 were not. The following gender and racial compositions, as well as year of study, were reported:

Table 7.5.   Demographic data - subjects who completed the empowerment questionnaire

		EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS:	NON-PARTICIPANTS:	TOTAL:
GENDER:	**Male:**	25	70	95
	Female:	41	150	191
RACE:	**Black:**	48	35	83
	White:	13	140	153
	Indian/ Coloured:	5	45	50
YEAR OF STUDY:	**1st:**	58	182	240
	2nd:	7	35	42
	3rd:	1	3	4
TOTAL:		66	220	286

257 of the 286 subjects had taken Psychology 110 in the first semester. When asked to indicate their class of pass for this course, the following frequencies were reported:

Table 7.6.   Psy 110 class of pass - subjects who completed the empowerment questionnaire

		EMP. PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS:	NON-PARTICIPANTS:	TOTAL:
CLASS OF PASS IN PSYCH 110:	75 - 100%	1	8	9
	68 - 74%	6	26	32
	60 - 67%	9	31	40
	50 - 59%	21	80	99
	40 - 49%	23	38	61
	0 - 39%	6	11	16
TOTAL:		66	194	257

7.5.3. Materials:

The empowerment questionnaire began with the same demographic section, as in the evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix D). Subjects then indicated the strength of their agreement with 75 five-point rating scales exploring their experiences of studying Psychology 120, with scores summed to gain a composite score of academic empowerment. The final section asked subjects to select and rank four from ten possible reasons for their success or failure in Psychology 110. It was hoped that answers to this section would provide information regarding students' attributions for success and failure as well as internal or external locus of control. (Due to the large amount of data, however, this section was excluded from analysis for the current study.)

Rating scales were based on existing links between empowerment and control and community participation (Rappaport, 1987), self efficacy (Bandura, 1997), assertiveness and self esteem (Kieffer, 1984), learned helplessness (Zimmerman, 1990b), co-operation (Zimmerman, 1995) and autonomous learning (Taylor and Burgess, 1995). Ten scales of academic empowerment were therefore identified, namely locus of control, power, assertiveness, self esteem, learned helplessness, co-operation, time management, motivation, and active and autonomous learning.

Questions were then generated, based on the above literature and on existing scales, namely the Study Process Questionnaire (Biggs, 1987), the Internal and External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the School Participation Empowerment Scale (Short and Rinehart, 1992), the Self Empowerment Index (Wilson, 1993), Learning Resources Profile (Wong, 1994) and Time Management Profile (Wong, 1994). Attempts were made to balance the number of positively and negatively worded questions to avoid a bias towards agreement among respondents.

Items were checked by two experts (both senior staff members in the Psychology department at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg), for clarity of wording, expression of a single idea and relation to the empowerment construct. Following refinement, the questionnaire was then piloted on forty Psychology level 200 students, with the following demographic profile:

Table 7.7.   Demographic profile - empowerment questionnaire pilot study

GENDER:	Male:	8
	Female:	32
RACE:	Black:	17
	White:	10
	Indian/ Coloured:	13
YEAR OF STUDY:	1st:	1
	2nd:	38
	3rd:	1
ATTENDANCE AT EDP TUTORIAL PROGRAMME IN FIRST YEAR:	Yes:	21
	No:	19
CLASS OF PASS IN PSYCHOLOGY 110:	75 - 100%	2
	68 - 74%	10
	60 - 67%	13
	50 - 59%	13
	40 - 49%	1
	0 - 39%	0

Item analysis led to several changes to the questionnaire. Changes were based either on a low standard deviation for a particular item, low reliability of a sub-scale, or on item-total statistics (such as the effect on the overall reliability of a sub-scale and the whole questionnaire if an item were deleted). Sub-scales were also altered if they were considered to have too few items. Subjects were also asked to comment on the clarity of item wording.

As a result of the pilot study one item was deleted from the questionnaire and a new one substituted and the wording of seven items was changed. Three items were also added to the learned helplessness scale, two to the co-operation scale and two to the time management scale. Two questions were removed from the motivation scale, one from the co-operation scale and one from the autonomous learning scale. The ten sub-scales on the final questionnaire thus each had between seven and twelve items, with several items appearing on more than one scale.

7.5.4. Procedure:

Data was collected in October, towards the end of the 1994 Psychology 120 course. Students completed the questionnaire during a lecture and all students who attended class on the day of data collection were included in the sample. This approach was thought preferable to providing students with questionnaires to return at their convenience, as previous course evaluation had shown return rates of under 10% if students take questionnaires away from the lecture. At the beginning of the class students were informed that a study was being conducted concerning study methods and attitudes towards the study of Psychology. They were then asked whether they were willing to be subjects and complete a questionnaire during the current lecture period. All students were willing to do so. The questionnaire was then handed out. Students were informed that all responses would be anonymous and so they were asked to complete all questions honestly. Subjects were thanked for their time and instructed to begin the questionnaire.

On completion of the questionnaire, students were given permission to leave the lecture hall quietly, so as not to disturb those students still busy. Subjects took between 14 and 44 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

CHAPTER EIGHT: RESULTS OF THE PROGRAMME EVALUATION:

8.1. INTRODUCTION:

A multi-method approach to evaluation was used for this study, as advocated by Agar (1988) for educational interventions. This hoped to assess some of the complex, interacting factors influencing the outcome of the empowerment programme and provide a fuller evaluation both in terms of students' academic performance as well as their attitudes towards the programme.

8.2. QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME:

The quantitative impact of the empowerment programme on academic performance was assessed using three methods:

8.2.1. Descriptive statistics:

Descriptive techniques described differences between the performance of students who attended the empowerment programme (group A), those who attended course revision tutorials (group B) and those who chose not to attend additional tutorials but were matched with those in group A in terms of race and class of pass in the Psychology 110 course (group C).

Analysis of the pass rates for Psychology 120 revealed the following differences:

Table 8.1.   Pass rates for Psychology 120 - race x group

		WHITE:		INDIAN/ COLOURED:		BLACK:		TOTAL:	
		PASS:	FAIL:	PASS:	FAIL:	PASS:	FAIL:	PASS:	FAIL:
GROUP	**N:**	14	-	5	1	52	2	71	3
A:	**%:**	100%	-	83%	17%	96%	4%	96%	4%
GROUP	**N:**	32	3	17	5	42	14	91	22
B:	**%:**	91%	9%	77%	23%	75%	25%	81%	19%
GROUP	**N:**	12	2	2	4	20	24	34	30
C:	**%:**	86%	14%	33%	67%	45%	55%	53%	47%
TOTAL:	**N:**	58	5	24	10	114	40	196	55
	%:	92%	8%	71%	29%	74%	26%	78%	22%

These results are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 8.1.   Psychology 120 pass rates - groups A, B and C
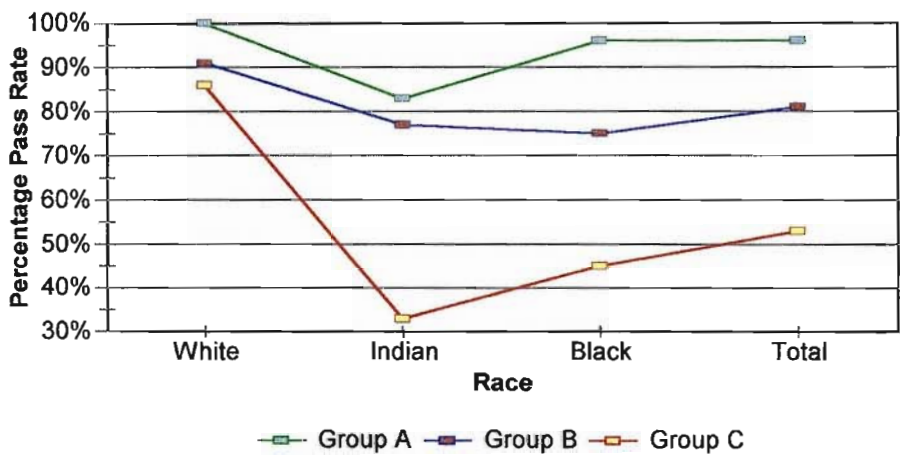
Mean final Psychology 120 marks were also calculated for all three races within the three groups, yielding the following results:

Table 8.2.   Mean final marks for Psychology 120 - race x group

	WHITE:		INDIAN:		BLACK:		TOTAL:	
	N:	MEAN:	N:	MEAN:	N:	MEAN:	N:	MEAN:
GROUP A:	14	71.14%	6	54.17%	54	55.63%	74	58.45%
GROUP B:	35	65.53%	22	55.00%	56	52.91%	113	57.35%
GROUP C:	14	60.80%	6	45.67%	44	48.07%	64	50.83%
TOTAL:	63	65.65%	34	53.26%	154	52.50%	251	56.01%

Graph 8.2.   Mean final Psychology 120 mark - groups A, B and C
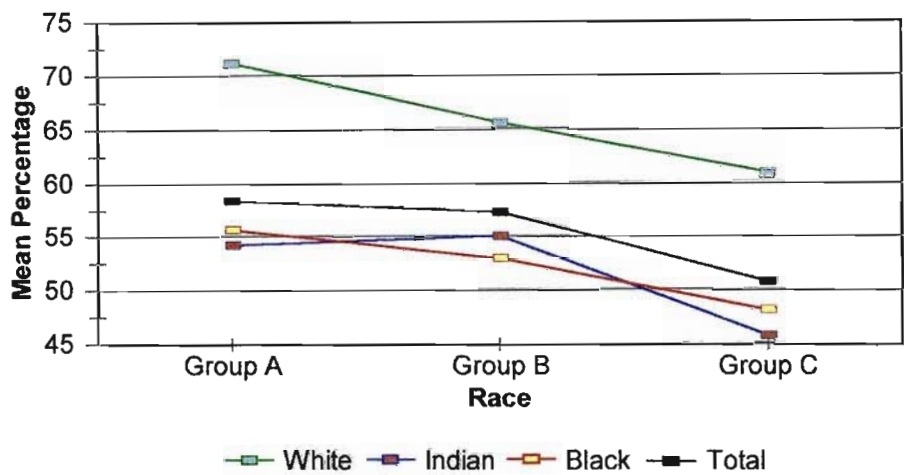
In order to see whether any improvement in performance had taken place over time, within any of the three groups, mean marks were calculated for several aspects of the Psychology 120 course, as well as the first class test of the Psychology 110 course. This was the first major piece of assessment for the year and thus provided a base from which to begin comparing the three groups. Five sets of marks were compared - the Psychology 110 first class test, the two Psychology 120 class tests, the Psychology 120 class mark, (composed of the two class tests, five tutorial exercises and a homework exercise) and the final mark for Psychology 120 (75% of which consisted of the examination mark and 25% of which was the class mark). As every exercise had a different total mark, all marks were converted to percentages for ease of comparison. The following results were observed:

Table 8.3.　　Mean percentages for five Psychology 100 exercises, Mar - Dec x group

	PSYCH 110 TEST 1:	PSYCH 120 TEST 1:	PSYCH 120 TEST 2:	PSYCH 120 CLASS MARK:	PSYCH 120 FINAL MARK:
GROUP A (N=74):	44.38%	61.56%	53.08%	63.52%	58.45%
GROUP B (N=113):	49.54%	56.92%	54.44%	57.44%	57.35%
GROUP C (N=64):	44.94%	56.86%	46.84%	54.92%	50.83%

Graph 8.3.　　Mean marks for five Psychology 100 exercises, Mar - Dec, groups A, B and C
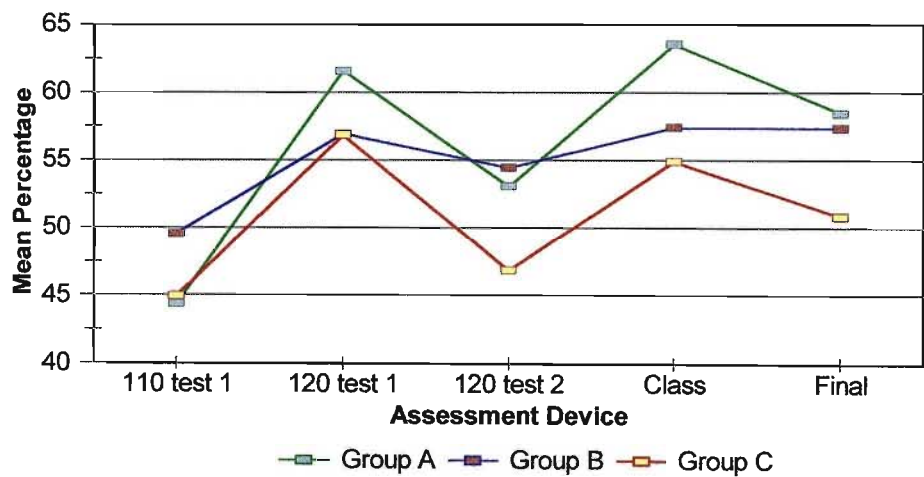
8.2.2. Two way analysis of variance:

To assess whether differences in final course marks between the three groups were significant, a two way analysis of variance was calculated, using race and group as the two independent variables and final Psychology 120 mark as the dependent measure. Results revealed significant main effects for both race ($p<0.0001$) and group ($p<0.001$). No significant interaction between race and group was found.

Table 8.4.   Two way analysis of variance - final Psychology 120 mark x race x group

Source of Variation:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:
Race:	7764.419	3882.209	35.710*
Group:	1507.221	753.611	6.932**
Race x Group:	204.057	51.014	0.469

* $p < 0.0001$ ** $p < 0.001$

As can be seen from Table 8.2. and Graph 8.2, summing all three groups together, white students performed best (mean 65.65%), followed by Indian and Coloured students (mean 53.26%) and finally Black students performed poorest of the three race groups (mean 52.50%). Students who participated in the empowerment programme (group A) performed best (mean 58.45%), followed by those who had participated in the revision tutorials the previous year (group B) (mean 57.35%), followed by those who did not attend an additional tutorial programme (group C) (mean 50.83).

8.2.3. Trend analysis:

A trend analysis was performed to determine whether a significant improvement or decrease in performance occurred over time for any of the three groups. Five marks were used for this analysis. The Psychology 110 first class test, before the empowerment programme was begun, provided an initial baseline comparison. The other marks were the first and second class tests of Psychology 120, held after approximately four and eight weeks of the empowerment programme, and the Psychology 120 class and final marks calculated at the semester's end. As all marks were of different totals they were converted into z scores for the trend analysis.

Significant linear trends were revealed for groups A and C, with group A showing a significant upward trend over the five marks and group C showing a significant decline in performance (See Table 8.3. for the mean percentages for each group for the five sets of marks). No significant trend was noticed for group B.

Table 8.5.   Trend analysis - estimates for linear trend for five Psychology 100 marks x Group

	Coefficient:	Standard Error:	t-Value:	Significant t:
Group A:	0.23078348	0.05638	4.09301	0.00011*
Group B:	0.001145344	0.069	0.0166	0.98679
Group C:	-0.25586609	0.07594	-3.36920	0.00129**

* $p < 0.0005$ ** $p < 0.005$

Results of the trend analysis are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 8.4.   Z scores for five Psychology 100 marks - groups A, B and C
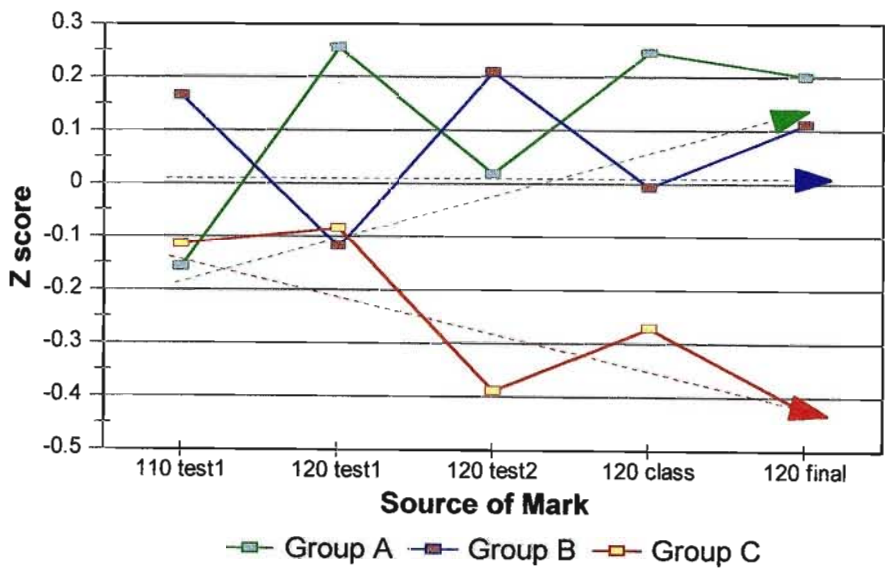
To summarise, the above quantitative results reveal a higher pass rate for group A (96%) than groups B (80%) or C (53%). The Psychology 120 final mark of students in group A was also significantly higher (mean of 58.45%) that those of groups B (57.35%) or C (50.83%). Finally a significant upward linear trend was noted for group A across a set of five marks, while a significant decrease in performance was noted for group C across the same marks.

8.3. QUALITATIVE EVALUATION:

The qualitative part of the evaluation consisted of rating scales and open-ended questions on the evaluation questionnaire as well as the content of focus group discussions. Responses to the rating scales were described in terms of mean scores (on a scale of 1-5) and the percentage of subjects who scored 4 (somewhat agreed) or 5 (strongly agreed). Responses to the open-ended questions and focus group discussions were content analysed according to the method described by Sandus and Pinhey (1983) with the unit of analysis being an idea or conceptual cluster. Ideas were grouped according to the theme expressed and whether the idea contained a positive, favourable, or negative, critical opinion about the programme. In the focus group discussions this was done for all six topics covered, separately, as well as for the discussion as a whole.

8.3.1. Evaluation questionnaire:

The questionnaire consisted of six sections each of between four and ten questions. Each had a set of rating scales for which scores of 1-5 were given and one or more open-ended questions.

8.3.1.1. Reliability:

Alpha reliability coefficients yielded the following results:

Table 8.6.   Alpha reliability coefficients - sub-scales and total questionnaire

Sub-scale:	Alpha Reliability Coefficient:
Content:	0.8305
Handouts:	0.7968
Discussion:	0.6095
Teaching Methods:	0.7054
Empowerment:	0.7724
General:	0.7536
Total:	0.8969

8.3.1.2. Means - sub-scales and entire questionnaire:

Mean scores were calculated for the six sub-scales and total questionnaire, as follows:

Table 8.7.   Mean scores - sub-scales and total questionnaire

Scale:	Scale Mean:	Number of Items:	Mean per Item:
Content:	43.0000	10	4.3
Handouts:	36.5538	9	4.1
Discussion:	21.3231	5	4.3
Teaching Methods:	35.6563	8	4.5
Empowerment:	39.5417	9	4.3
General:	18.7385	4	4.7
Total:	194.3437	45	4.3

8.3.1.3.   Responses to rating scales and open-ended questions:

8.3.1.3.1.   Content covered:

Attitudes towards the content covered in the empowerment programme were positive. Mean responses to questions rating how useful subjects found each area to their study behaviour ranged from 3.9 to 4.7. The most useful areas, both in terms of mean scores and percentage of respondents who rated them fairly or extremely useful (scores of 4 or 5) were revision of difficult lecture content (rated fairly or extremely useful by 95% of subjects with a mean score of 4.6), revision of practicals (rated useful by 92% of subjects with a mean score of 4.7) and revision of previous years' examination questions (rated useful by 92% of subjects with a mean score of 4.7). Least useful areas were considered to be time management (mean of 4 and rated useful by 75% of respondents) and the introduction to empowerment (mean of 3.9 and rated useful by 78% of respondents). The session exploring empowered behavioural techniques was rated more useful than the introductory empowerment session, (mean of 4.1 and rated useful by 85% of subjects). These results are summarised on the following two graphs:

Graph 8.5:   Percentage of subjects finding each area of content covered, useful (rating scales)
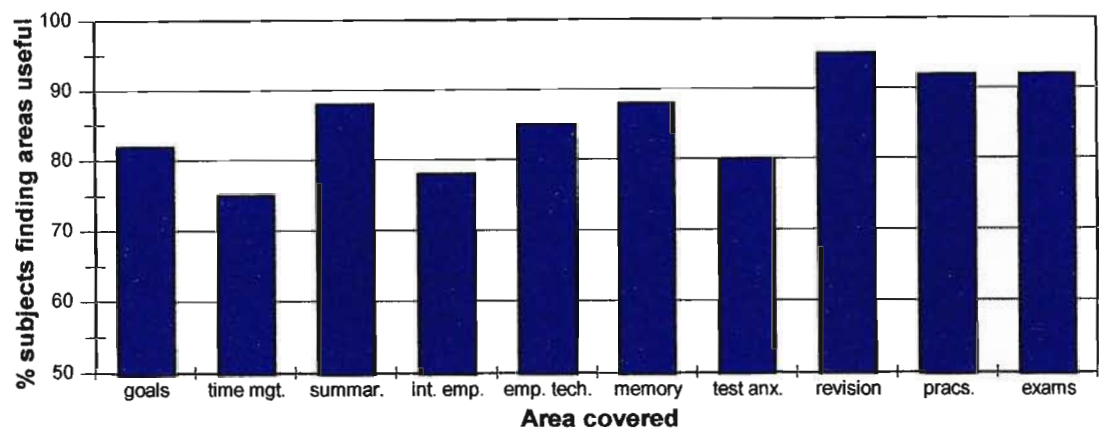
Graph 8.6.   Mean scores regarding attitudes towards content covered (rating scales)

Content areas covered:
Mean scores
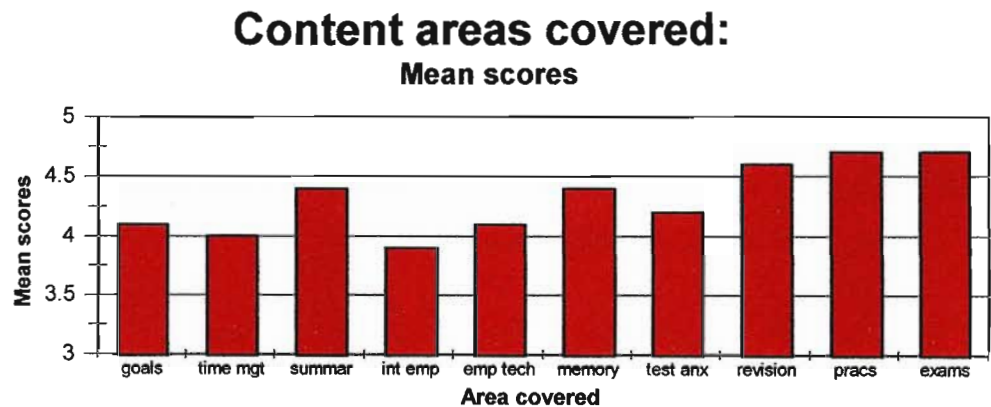
KEY:	
goals:	*Goal setting*
Time mgt:	*Time management*
Summar:	*Techniques for summarising textbook material*
Int emp:	*Introduction to empowerment*
Emp tech:	*Assertiveness and other techniques for behaving in an empowered fashion*
Memory:	*Memorising and recall of learnt material*
Test Anx:	*Test anxiety*
Revision:	*Revision of course content*
Pracs:	*Revision of practicals*
Exams:	*Going over old exam papers and past tests*

Fifty four responses were given to the first open-ended question, exploring areas subjects felt should have been given more emphasis in the programme. Fifteen respondents (28%) considered the empowerment programme fine as is, 34 (63%) felt it should have included more revision of lecture content, practicals and previous exam papers, and five respondents (9%) requested counselling for students under stress, teaching students how to evaluate their knowledge and encouraging better group discussion. These results are summarised below:

Graph 8.7.   Areas subjects considered should have been given more emphasis in the empowerment programme (open-ended question)
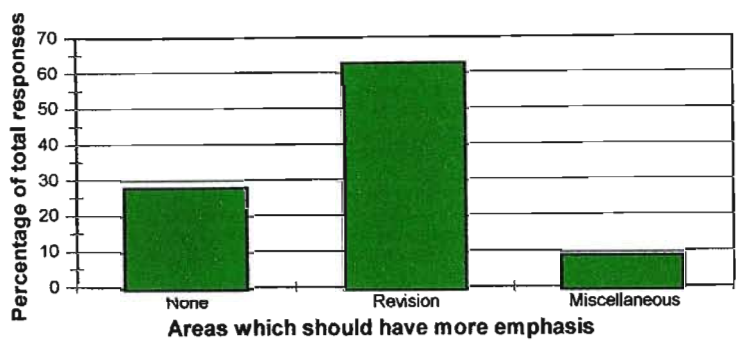
When asked whether there were areas which should have been given less emphasis, 37 (65%) of the 57 subjects who answered this question stated that no areas should have been de-emphasised as all contributed to the programme's success. Eight (14%) felt that empowerment should have been given less emphasis as some had covered this at school. Four subjects (7%) felt that less time should have been spent on time management, three each (5%) that academic skills and revision of lecture content should have been de-emphasised and two (4%) that less time should have been devoted to test anxiety. These results are summarised below:

Graph 8.8.   Areas subjects felt should have been given less emphasis (open-ended question)
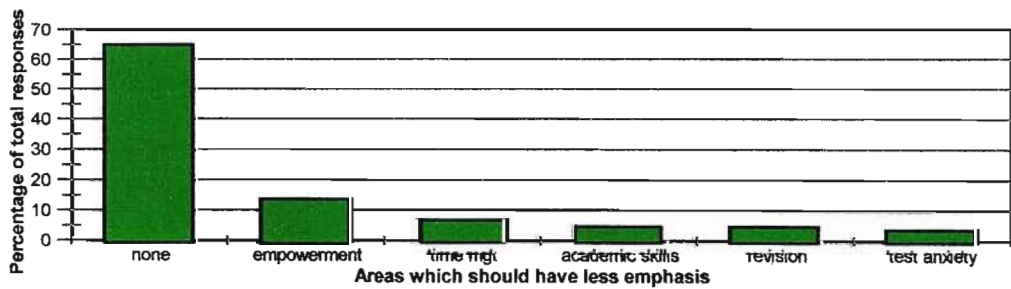
When asked whether any areas should have been omitted from the programme, 45 (90%) of the fifty subjects who answered this question stated that no area should have been left out as all content areas covered helped to improve their performance in Psychology 120. Two subjects (4%) felt that time management should have been left out, and one subject (2%) each stated that empowerment, goal setting and test anxiety should have been left out.

Graph 8.9.   Areas subjects considered should have been omitted (open-ended question)
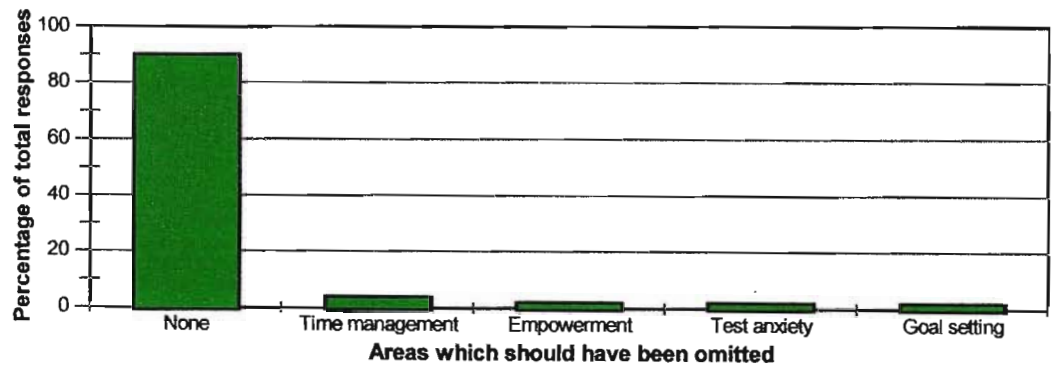
Finally subjects were asked whether there were additional topics that should have been included in the programme. Twenty two (55%) of the forty answers stated that no additional areas should have been covered. Ten subjects (25%) referred to sections of the Psychology 120 course which should have been revised and four (10%) mentioned practical activities to make Psychology more enjoyable, including videos, case studies and psychological research. The final four subjects (10%) made miscellaneous suggestions including increasing the number of classes and offering informal counselling.

Graph 8.10.   Additional topics subjects considered should have been included in the programme (open-ended questions)
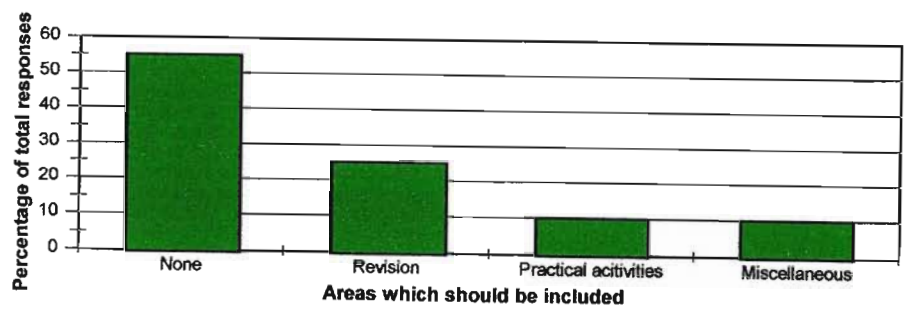
8.3.1.3.2.   Handouts given:

At every session students were given three handouts: an interesting reading relevant to the current lecture topic, a set of notes on the current topic in the empowerment programme and a set of revision exercises. The revision exercises appeared to be most popular, with 97% of subjects rating them as fairly or extremely useful (mean 4.8), 91% of subjects claiming they had used most or all of the exercises (mean 4.5) and 89% of subjects stating that the exercises had somewhat or greatly increased their enjoyment of Psychology (mean 4.4). Eighty six percent of subjects found the study skills handouts fairly or extremely useful (mean 4.3) and 83% of respondents claimed they had somewhat or greatly increased their enjoyment of Psychology (mean 4.0). Only 52% of respondents, however, stated that they had used most or all of the study skills' handouts (mean 3.5). The readings appeared to be least useful to students - 77% of subjects found them fairly or extremely useful (mean 4.0) and 77% (mean 4.0) stated that they had somewhat or greatly increased their enjoyment of Psychology. Only 43% of subjects (mean 3.3) had used most or all of the readings. These results are summarised in the following graph (due to the volume of results, graphs for sections b-f will be presented solely in terms of percentage of subjects scoring 4 or 5, and not in terms of mean responses):

Graph 8.11.   Percentage of subjects finding handouts useful etc. (rating scales)
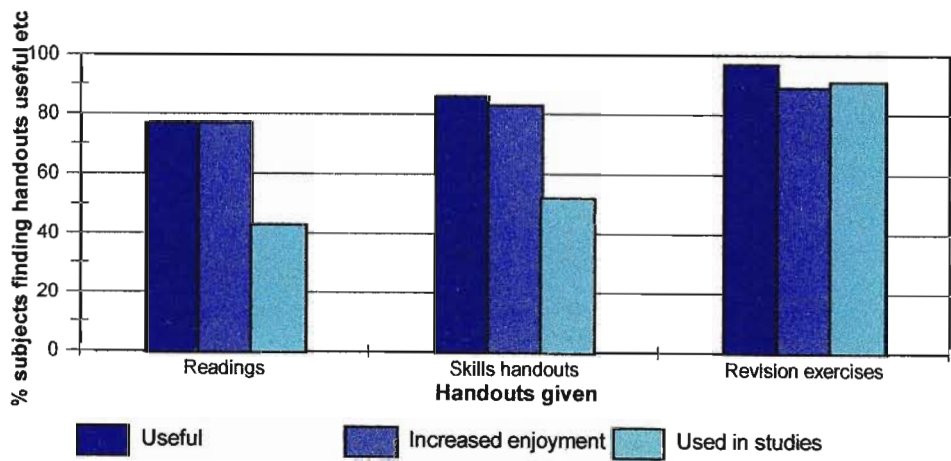
When asked for additional comments regarding the programme's use of interesting readings 34 (81%) of the 42 responses given stated that the readings had been helpful, clarifying lecture content, improving their understanding of the course and increasing the relevance of lecture

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content. Of the remaining eight students, five (12%) felt that too many readings had been given and they did not have time to use them all, two (5%) felt that the readings should have been examinable and one student (2%) felt that they should have preceded the appropriate lectures.

Of the 24 comments regarding the study skills handouts, 18 (75%) stated that they were useful, particularly for disadvantaged students. Two students (8.5%) stated that they lacked time to make use of the handouts and a further two (8.5%) thought that more time should have been devoted to addressing the skills in class rather than providing details in a handout. One student (4%) felt that the handouts were given too often and one (4%) stated that study skills should be de-emphasised to provide more time for course content revision.

The last question in this section asked for comments regarding the use of revision exercises. Thirty three of 39 responses (84%) emphasised the value of the exercises in helping them cope with departmental tests, identify their weaknesses and give them confidence to succeed with Psychology 120. Three students (8%) felt that the exercises should have been used during class time rather than for self study. The remaining three students (8%) made miscellaneous comments which included the fact that more time was needed to make better use of the handouts and that a test should have been used to compel students to use the exercises.

8.3.1.3.3.   Group discussion:

Subjects expressed positive views about the use of group discussion in the programme, with 94% of subjects (mean 4.7) considering that sufficient opportunities had been provided for them to discuss problem areas, 92 % (mean 4.5) agreeing that the programme had helped them feel comfortable sharing their problems in a group and 91% (mean 4.6) agreeing that sufficient chance had been provided for discussion. Seventy four percent of subjects (mean 4.0) somewhat or strongly agreed that they felt more able to take an active part in discussions and 66% (mean 3.6) that they were more able to air their views in a group, than if they hadn't attended the programme. These results are summarised as follows:

Graph 8.12.   Attitudes towards group discussion (rating scales)
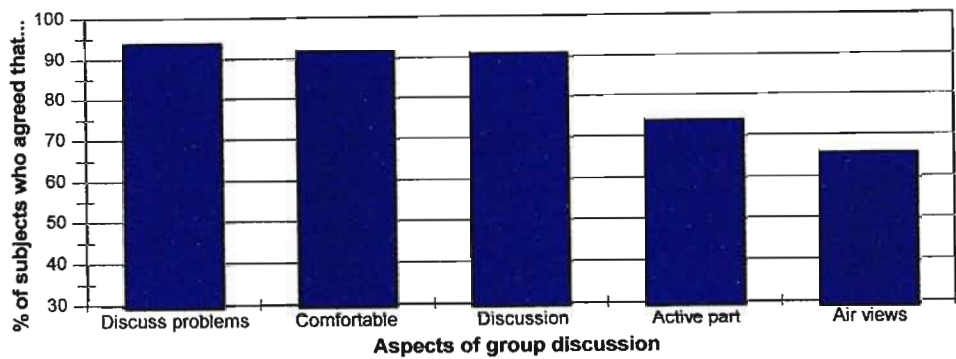
KEY:
Percentage of subjects who agreed that...

Discuss problems:	*sufficient time had been provided for discussion of problem areas*
Comfortable:	*the programme helped them feel comfortable sharing their problems in a group*
Discussion:	*sufficient chance had been provided for discussion*
Active part:	*they felt more able to take an active part in group discussions*
Air views:	*they felt more able to air their views in a group*

When asked for additional comments, 22 (69%) of the 32 students who responded stated that the discussions were beneficial and more participatory than lectures or departmental tutorials. Some of these subjects stated that the group discussions increased their confidence to air views in a group, while others stated that group discussions exposed them to the perspectives of different groups of students. Of the 10 negative comments, two (6%) referred to unease between the race groups, two (6%) thought that the groups were too big, and two (6%) that some students seemed unwilling to participate. The final four students (13%) felt that more debate should have been encouraged, that students should have been forced to prepare for discussions and that more time was needed for discussion.

8.3.1.3.4.   Teaching methodology:

The next eight rating scales focussed on the pedagogical approach adopted in the programme. Ninety nine percent of subjects somewhat or strongly agreed that the tutor had adapted the course to suit their needs (mean 4.8) and 95% agreed that classes had been run in a democratic

manner (mean 4.8). Ninety four percent of subjects agreed that attendance had increased their ability to work in an independent manner (mean 4.6) and 92% felt that they had developed some of the academic skills needed to succeed in Psychology 120 by attending the programme (mean 4.6). Eighty six percent of subjects stated that by attending they had become aware of their strengths (mean 4.4) and 88% (mean 4.5) that they had become aware of their weaknesses. Seventy five percent of subjects (mean 4.2) agreed that the introductory activities used at the beginning of each session increased their enjoyment of Psychology and 74% felt that they had been involved in determining the aims of the programme (mean 3.9).

These results are summarised in the following graph:

Graph 8.13.   Attitudes towards the teaching methods adopted (rating scales)
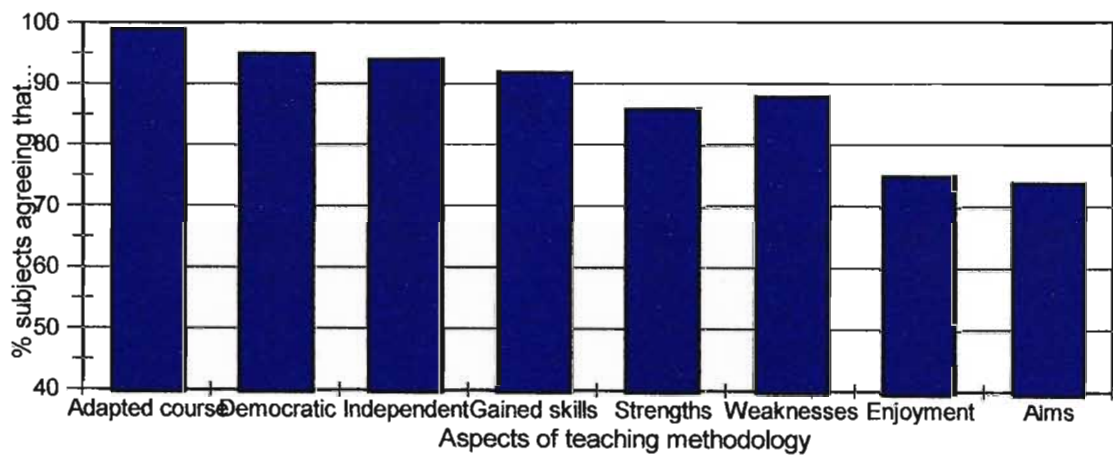
KEY:
Percentage of subjects who agreed that...

Adapted course:	*the tutor adapted the course to meet their needs*
Democratic:	*the tutorials were run in a democratic fashion*
Independent:	*they had developed independent learning skills*
Gained skills:	*they had developed academic skills needed to succeed in Psychology*
Strengths:	*they had become aware of their strengths*
Weaknesses:	*they had become aware of their weaknesses*
Enjoyment:	*introductory activities increased their enjoyment of Psychology*
Aims:	*they had contributed to determining programme aims*

Few responses were given to the open ended questions in this section, which focussed on some of the programme's aims. Sixteen subjects provided extra comments regarding the aim of developing independent study skills. Nine of these (56%) viewed this aim as central to the success of the programme and stated that they had developed independent learning skills. Two subjects felt that this aim should have received greater emphasis (13%) and two (13%) stated that more class exercises should have been done to allow students to evaluate their knowledge. The remaining three students (18%) referred to the need for more group work, and for individual students to take responsibility for their learning.

Eighteen comments were given regarding the aim of empowering students. Twelve subjects (67%) claimed that the focus on empowerment had helped to build their confidence and made them responsible for their studies, as well as able to bring about change within the academic context. Three subjects (17%) felt that the topic should have been introduced earlier in the year, two (11%) that it was hard to practically apply the concept of empowerment and one (5%) that the department should be more receptive to empowered students.

Thirteen students commented on the aim of developing the academic skills to succeed in Psychology. Five of these (38%) claimed that the focus on skills development improved their academic performance in Psychology as well as other disciplines. The remaining eight (62%) gave suggestions for improvement including devoting more time to skills development and introducing skills other than those focussed on in the programme.

Nineteen subjects gave additional comments regarding the aim of increasing students' enjoyment of Psychology. Ten of these (53%) claimed that the programme had helped to make Psychology more interesting and relevant. The remaining nine (47%) made suggestions for additional enjoyable activities including psychological games, videos and trips to hospitals.

8.3.1.3.5.   Student empowerment:

Here students rated the impact of the programme's focus on empowerment on various aspects of academic life. It appeared to have had the strongest influence on their ability to take responsibility for their studies (rated somewhat or very helpful in this area by 97% of subjects

with a mean of 4.6). It also had a strong impact on their feelings of control over their studing (rated helpful in this area by 94% of subjects with a mean of 4.5) and their ability to seek help in Psychology when needed (rated helpful by 91% of subjects with a mean of 4.4). Empowerment was considered least helpful to students in terms of their participation in university life (rated somewhat or very helpful in this area by 68% of subjects, with a mean of 4). Results for this section are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 8.14.   <u>Percentage of subjects finding empowerment useful (rating scales)</u>
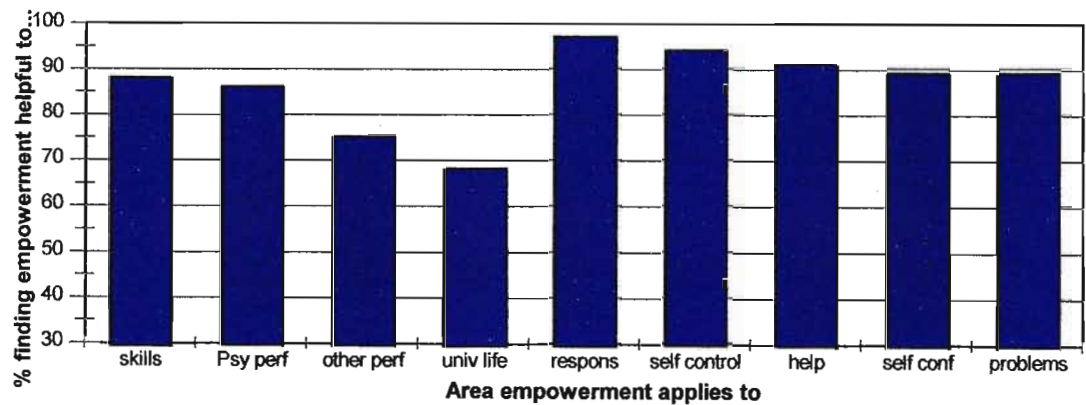
KEY:	
Skills:	*Impact of empowerment on the use of academic skills*
Psy perf:	*Impact of empowerment on performance in Psychology*
other perf:	*Impact of empowerment on performance in other courses*
univ life:	*Impact of empowerment on participation in university life*
respons:	*Impact of empowerment on ability to take responsibility for studying*
self control:	*Impact of empowerment on feelings of control over studying*
help:	*Impact of empowerment on ability to seek help in Psychology if needed*
self conf:	*Impact of empowerment on self confidence*
problems:	*Impact of empowerment on ability to face rather than ignore problems*

Responses to the two open ended questions in this section were low. Only twelve subjects suggested additional aspects of empowerment that should have been added to the programme and so few conclusions could be drawn. Half of these subjects stated that all relevant aspects had been covered and that the focus on empowerment had been helpful and the rest requested

a more practical approach, focussing on solving real life problems particularly considering the difficulties faced by many African students in what they perceived to be a hostile university environment. Of the twelve suggestions for areas of empowerment that should have been excluded from the course, ten felt that all aspects covered were useful and none should be omitted and wo stated that less time should have been devoted to empowerment training.

8.3.1.3.6.   General:

Responses to the final four rating scales were very positive. Ninety nine percent of respondents agreed that the programme had helped them to cope with Psychology 120 (mean 4.8) and 99% that a similar programme should be offered to future students (mean 4.9). Ninety two percent agreed that their enthusiasm for Psychology had increased due to attending the programme (mean 4.6) and 91% stated that the programme had met their expectations (mean 4.4).

When asked what effect attending this programme had had on subjects' enjoyment of Psychology 56 responses were given. Of these respondents, 54 (96%) said that their enjoyment of Psychology had increased and two (4%) that the programme had had no effect on their enjoyment of Psychology. Fifty one subjects expanded on how and why the programme had increased their enjoyment of Psychology. Some of these felt that the programme had increased their understanding of Psychology and helped them solve course-related difficulties and others that the programme had made Psychology more interesting and relevant to their experiences. Some stated that their sense of confidence and empowerment had increased, that their motivation had increased or that their self esteem had improved or that they had benefited from group discussion and meeting new people. A few students found Psychology more interesting because they had access to additional handouts and exercises, and had gained valuable learning skills and one stated that Psychology seemed more interesting because the programme's tutor was willing to listen to one's difficulties and take an interest in one's concerns.

When asked what impact the programme had had on their academic performance, 14 of the 53 subjects who answered this question (27%) felt that it had increased their performance greatly, 32 (60%) that it had increased it somewhat, six (11%) that it had slightly increased their performance and one subject (2%) felt that it had had no effect. Some subjects attributed their

Subjects were then asked to name the most valuable aspect they had gained by attending the programme. Eighty five responses were given (some respondents gave more than one answer). Twenty nine subjects (34%) referred to an increase in academic performance, greater understanding and revision of lecture content. Twenty three (27%) felt they had gained confidence, empowerment, and a more positive attitude towards their studies. Seventeen (20%) valued the academic skills developed and eleven (13%) valued discussing issues in a group and making friends. Five subjects (6%) felt the most valuable thing they had gained was a greater enjoyment of Psychology. These results are summarised below:

Graph 8.16:   Areas considered the most valuable aspect of the programme (open-ended question)
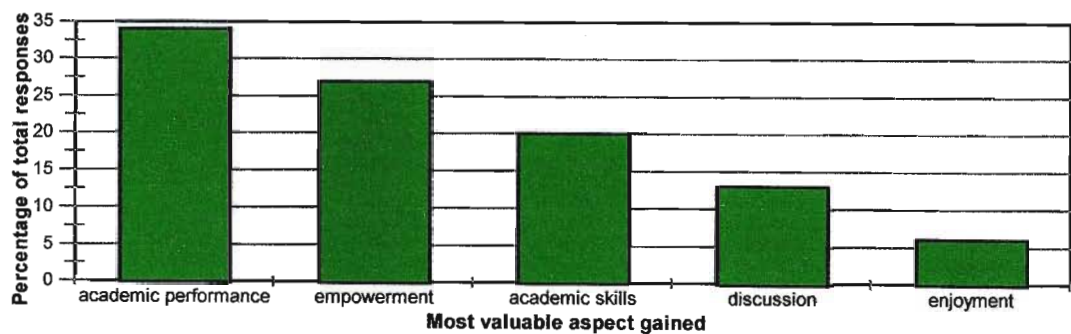
KEY:

Most valuable aspect gained by attending the programme was...

Academic performance:	that it led to an increase in academic performance
Empowerment:	that one gained confidence and empowerment
Academic skills:	that one learnt valuable academic skills
Discussion:	the access to group discussion and meeting new people
Enjoyment:	that one's enjoyment of Psychology increased

8.3.1.4.   Responses to the questionnaire as a whole:

As can be seen from Table 8.7., responses to the rating scales in all six sections and the questionnaire as a whole were positive, with mean scores ranging from 4.1. for the section on handouts and readings, to 4.7 for the final section on general attitudes towards the programme, and 4.3 for the questionnaire as a whole. These results are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 8.18:   Mean responses per item for all sub-scales and total questionnaire
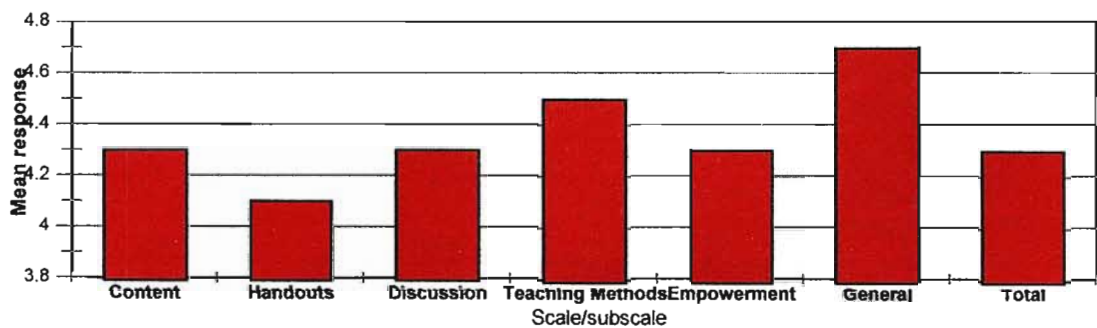
Considering all of the open-ended questions together, a total of 821 ideas were expressed, of which 613 were positive ideas expressing favourable attitudes towards the programme, and 208 were negative criticisms of the programme, as can be seen in the following graph:

Graph 8.19:   Total positive and negative comments made (open-ended questions)
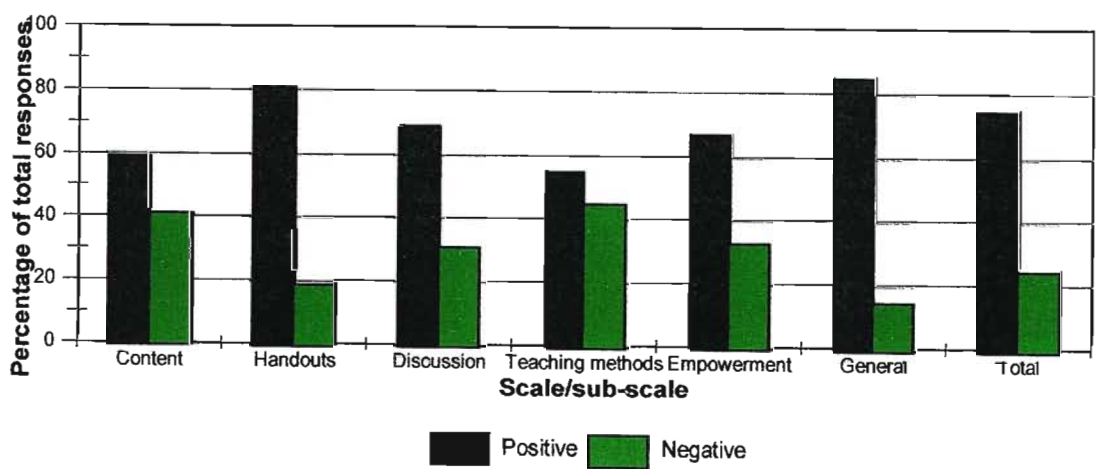
8.3.1.5. Racial and academic ability related differences:

Attention to specific open-ended questions and rating scales led me to suspect racial differences in the way students responded to the empowerment programme as well as differences according to academic ability. In one open-ended question, for example, two white students stated that the programme focussed too heavily on skills development and empowerment, aspects they had covered at school, and that separate skills development and revision tutorials should be offered to meet the needs of different students. Perhaps a focus on empowerment was perceived as more beneficial by black students, most of whom had come from a background of powerlessness and passivity, than by white students, many of whom perceive themselves as already in control of their studies. In a similar vein, perhaps the empowerment focus was perceived as more beneficial by students of lower academic ability than those of high academic ability, who are more likely to already be confident and in control.

Analysis of individual questions in the Content Covered section of the questionnaire revealed markedly different attitudes towards three areas of the programme according to race and academic ability. The session on time management was rated fairly or extremely useful by 50% of white students compared to 81% of black students and by 64% of students whose final mark for Psychology 120 was 68% or above compared to 78% of those below 68%. (As there were only five Indian and Coloured students, they were omitted from this part of the analysis.)

The introduction to empowerment was rated useful by 58% of white students but 85% of black students and by 55% of those scoring 68% or above but 83% of those scoring below 68%. Finally the session on test anxiety was considered useful by 58% of white students and 90% of black students, and by 45% of those who scored 68% or above in Psychology 120 compared to 87% of those who scored below 68%. These results are summarised on the following two graphs:

Graph 8.20. Attitudes towards content areas - comparison of black and white responses
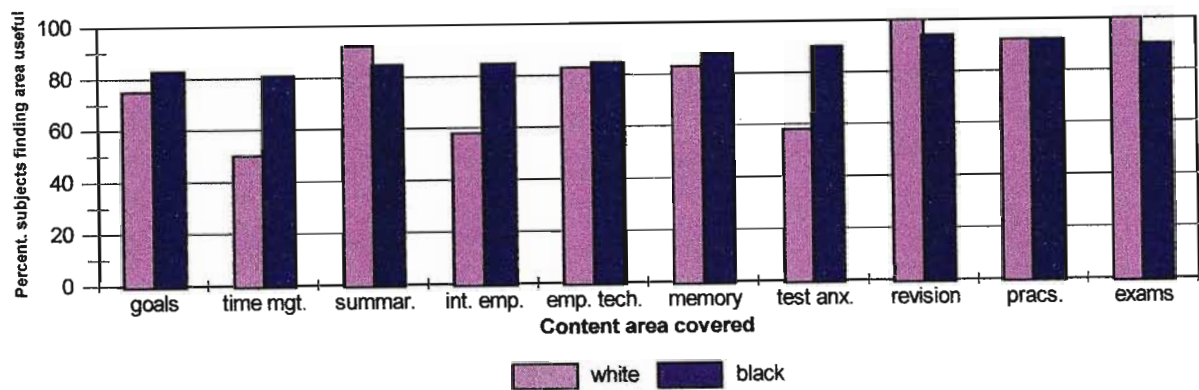
Graph 8.21. Attitudes towards content areas - comparison of students scoring below 68% for Psychology 120 to those scoring 68% or above
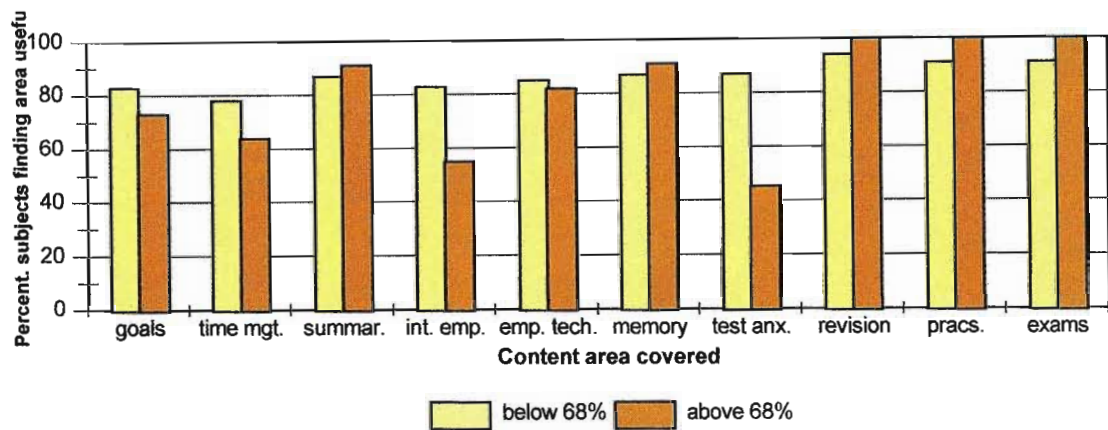
Some differences were also shown in attitudes towards the handouts. Only 50% of white students rated the extra readings as useful, while 85% of black students considered them fairly or extremely useful. No differences according to academic ability were show for this item. Considering the use of study skills handouts, only 8% of white students claimed to use most or all of the handouts, while 58% of black students made use of them. Only 13% of those students who scored 68% or above in Psychology 120 used the handouts compared to 59% of those who scored below 68%. Sixty seven percent of white students claimed that the study skills handouts had somewhat or greatly increased their enjoyment of Psychology compared to 88% of black students. Only 55% of those students scoring 68% or above for Psychology 120 claimed that these handouts increased their enjoyment of Psychology, compared to 89% for those scoring below 68%. These results are summarised as follows:

Graph 8.22.   Attitudes towards handouts - comparison of black and white responses
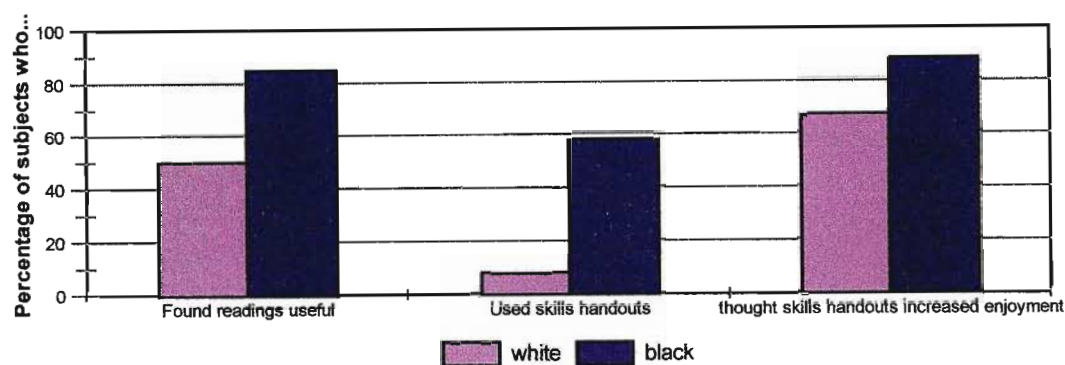
Graph 8.23.   Attitudes towards skills handouts - comparison of students scoring below 68% for Psychology 120 to those scoring 68% or above
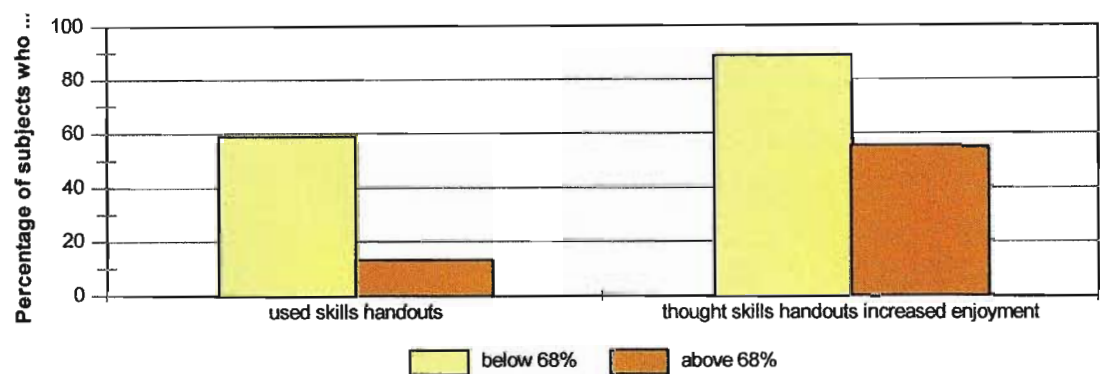
In the section on teaching methodology 58% of white students agreed that they had become more aware of their strengths by attending the programme, compared to 94% of black students. Finally in the section on empowerment, 67% of white students found the focus on empowerment somewhat or very helpful in terms of their use of study skills, compared to 94% of black students, while 73% of students of higher academic ability found the empowerment work useful in this area, compared to 91% of those of lower academic ability.

No major differences according to race or academic ability were seen when items were combined into sub-scales and the whole questionnaire. No significant differences were found when two one way analyses of variance were calculated, using race and academic ability as the independent variables and score on the sub-scales and the total questionnaire as the dependent measure.

Table 8.8   Results of one way analysis of variance - questionnaire/sub-scale total x race

Scale:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:	Sig:
Content Covered:	78.588	39.294	1.183	0.313
Handouts:	96.438	48.219	1.826	0.170
Group Discussion:	25.006	12.503	1.086	0.344
Teaching Methods:	8.016	4.008	0.260	0.772
Empowerment:	54.086	27.043	2.029	0.140
General:	16.743	8.372	2.162	0.124
Total:	1046.812	523.406	1.946	0.152

Table 8.9   Results of one way analysis of variance - questionnaire/sub-scale total x pass

Scale:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:	Sig:
Content Covered:	30.778	15.389	0.460	0.633
Handouts:	22.690	11.345	0.416	0.662
Group Discussion:	24.629	12.315	1.082	0.345
Teaching Methods:	15.203	7.601	0.494	0.613
Empowerment:	60.165	30.083	2.300	0.109
General:	4.003	2.001	0.484	0.619

8.3.2. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

As mentioned above, focus group discussions were content analysed according to the method described by Sandus and Pinhey (1983), with the idea or conceptual cluster as the unit of analysis. Every time someone spoke a new idea was recorded, but occasionally one person's comment contained more than one idea and so this was recorded as several ideas. For all six discussion topics, ideas were recorded and then grouped into thematic units. Attempts were made to count the number of times each theme was covered both within a particular topic and in the discussion as a whole in order to determine the weighting given to every theme.

8.3.2.1.   **Themes covered - separate questions:**

8.3.2.1.1.   Advantages and disadvantages to attending the empowerment programme:

The first topic focussed on whether students considered it worthwhile to have attended the programme, the gains and losses of attending and aspects they found useful and not useful. A total of 133 ideas, covering 10 themes were discussed in the four groups, 127 (96%) of which expressed positive ideas and 6 (4%) of which were criticisms of the programme.

Thirty three ideas (25%) focussed on the benefits associated with the programme's focus on empowerment. Respondents claimed that this aspect was helpful to their study behaviour and the most valuable aspect of the programme:

> *The most valuable thing was the empowerment work. It gives us a technique to use and a confidence with which to approach our work.*

> *The success of the Education Development Programme (E.D.P.) is largely dependent on what we did in terms of empowerment.*

(Note that the term E.D.P. is used specifically to refer to this programme rather than education development programmes in general).

Respondents claimed that the focus on empowerment had taught them confidence, a greater sense of control over their work and a stronger sense of determination to succeed both in Psychology and their other courses:

> *I gained confidence by coming. I gained more control over my work. I felt that I'd done everything I could to do well.*

> *My attitude to learning has changed - I am less likely to think the Psychology exams are out to trick you.*

Several subjects described a change in attitude towards both success and failure:

If you fail courses the problem seems global, but because I'm passing Psychology, I feel like a conqueror. So I've become empowered in my other subjects, to now conquer them.

Now if I do fail a test or exercise, it feels less as if my whole world has caved in, because I now know how to do better in future, and I can learn from my mistakes.

Subjects valued the fact that tutorials were student-centred. They claimed that students played a more active, empowered role in this programme than in their other disciplines, where the content and structure of tutorials was predetermined with little flexibility to students' needs.

An equally popular theme (25%) stressed the benefits of the empowerment focus on academic performance. Respondents valued the revision exercises and past test papers and claimed the programme had led to an improvement in their academic performance:

The empowerment work really helped. I was going to drop Psychology but now my marks have picked up. I feel it helped and motivated me to do more.

If it wasn't for E.D.P I would have failed Psychology. I was about to give up.

If you come to E.D.P. and still fail, you only have yourself to blame.

The third most popular theme referred to the relationship between this programme and students' other courses, mentioned 20 times (15%). Some of these mentions focussed on the positive impact of this programme on respondents' other courses:

It has helped a lot in my other courses - for example Maths. It has given me the strength to carry on with the course. I now know how to decide what is important and make decisions about how to study the material in Maths.

Some respondents claimed that this programme was more fulfilling than academic development offerings in other disciplines. They stated that this programme had a broader coverage, going beyond material covered in lectures, whereas those in other disciplines merely revised lecture content. They valued the way this programme was guided by students' needs, while in other disciplines they considered academic development offerings too structured or a waste of time:

With the other E.D.P. tuts it's just like window dressing. The tutor is not prepared or they just impose their ideas on you. That doesn't happen in Psychology.

Fourteen respondents (10%) claimed that the programme had been useful and had helped them a great deal. Ten respondents (8%) claimed that their enjoyment of Psychology had increased, thus increasing their motivation to succeed:

I now come not to pass the test but because I enjoy the course.

Nine respondents (7%) focussed on the benefits of group discussion, claiming that discussions helped them determine whether they had understood a section of the course. Some had thus been motivated to form their own study groups. They also found it reassuring to discover through discussion that others shared similar academic difficulties:

At the start of Psychology I was very lost. It was a relief to come to these classes and find that other people shared my problems.

Six respondents (4%) stated that the programme gave a greater sense of focus and clarity to Psychology, helping them to identify the relative importance of various aspects of the course:

E.D.P. made the lectures seem clearer. I now know what to take from the lectures instead of trying to copy down everything, but without understanding it.

Six respondents (4%) identified aspects they did not find useful in the programme. They thought that the programme focussed too heavily on empowerment, that more time should have been spent on course revision, and that the group should have had a better racial balance:

E.D.P. would work best if there was a good racial mix, otherwise racial issues are ignored and one restrains oneself from being honest. It would be better if there are equal numbers of different race groups. Otherwise black students rely on the white students and don't take responsibility.

The final two students (2%) claimed that they had gained valuable learning skills by attending including how to analyse the textbook and use critical thinking skills.

The above findings are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 8.24.   Gains and losses associated with attending the empowerment programme
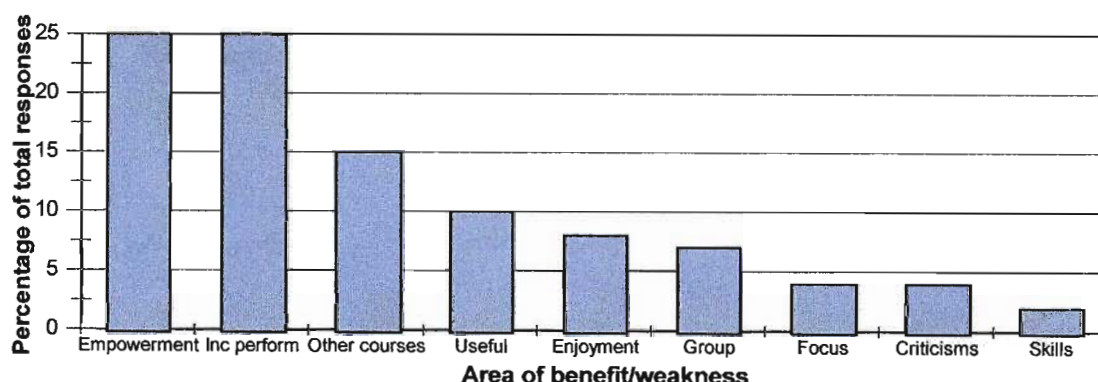
KEY:	
Empowerment:	*Benefit of programme in terms of greater confidence, responsibility and empowerment*
Inc perform:	*Benefit of programme in terms of increased academic performance*
Other courses:	*Relationship between this programme and other courses*
Useful:	*Usefulness of attending this programme*
Enjoyment	*Benefit of programme in terms of greater enjoyment of Psychology*
Group:	*Benefit of programme as a result of group discussion*
Focus:	*Benefit of programme in terms of focus and clarity given to Psychology course*
Criticisms:	*Critique/ weaknesses/flaws in empowerment programme*
Skills:	*Benefit of programme as a result of academic skills and strategies developed*

8.3.2.1.2.   Success of aims of empowerment programme:

The second topic for discussion explored respondents' opinions about three of the aims of the programme and whether these had been realised or not.

♦   The aim of developing independent learning skills:

Thirty six responses were given of which 34 (94%) were positive comments and two (6%) were criticisms of the programme. Seventeen comments (47%) referred to the development of a more positive attitude to learning and a growing sense of responsibility as a result of attending the programme. Respondents claimed that they had learnt to adopt a confident, active approach to their learning rather than passively expecting to fail. Several subjects stated that they felt more in control of their study behaviour and no longer believed that examiners were attempting to trick them. They also worked more consistently and were less likely to leave their studies until the last minute. Several also claimed that their change in attitude towards their studies had benefited their work in other disciplines.

Seven respondents (19%) claimed to enjoy Psychology more as a result of developing independent learning skills. They no longer attempted to memorise and repeat textbook information parrot fashion, but rather had developed deeper understanding of the material and an ability to relate it to their own experiences, which increased their enjoyment of the course.

Four respondents (11%) stated that the programme had taught them a useful strategy or set of skills with which to approach their learning:

> *I've found a great change. I now work much harder. Also when I read a book, I have a strategy, I know how to approach the book. I use the textbook like an encyclopaedia rather than learning it word for word.*

Four others (11%) stated that the programme had provided them with a greater sense of focus as they had learnt how to determine the relative importance of course content. Two respondents (6%) made critical comments. One stated that she had always been responsible and so the

programme had not benefited her in this regard, while the other felt that regular tests would provide valuable feedback as to whether attempts at greater independence in studying had led to an improvement in performance. The final two respondents made miscellaneous comments that could not be categorised. These findings are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 8.25.   Subjects' opinions regarding the aim of developing autonomous learners
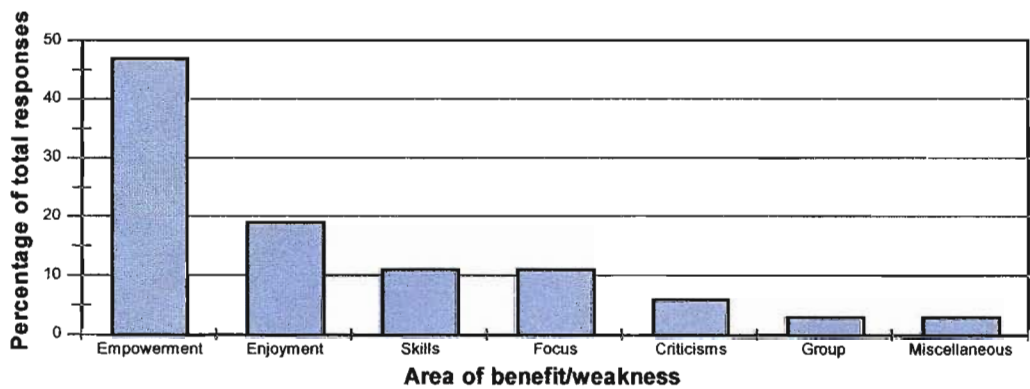
KEY:	
Empowerment:	*By developing independent learning skills the programme led to greater confidence and responsibility for learning*
Enjoyment:	*Independent learning skills led to greater enjoyment of Psychology*
Skills:	*Students learnt a useful set of academic skills and strategies*
Focus:	*Students achieved greater sense of focus and clarity about Psychology*
Criticisms:	*Critique/ weaknesses/flaws in programme in relation to aim of developing independent learning*
Group:	*Through developing independent learning skills, students learnt that others shared similar difficulties*
Miscellaneous:	*Miscellaneous responses*

♦   The aim of making Psychology more enjoyable:

Thirty two ideas were given in relation to this topic, of which 28 (88%) were positive comments and four (12%) negative comments. Fourteen respondents (44%) claimed that this

aim had been successfully realised and that their enjoyment of Psychology had increased. Eight students (25%) referred to attempts to make Psychology seem more relevant to students' own experiences which increased their enjoyment of the discipline. They particularly valued the fact that the examples provided in the programme tutorials were of South African rather than American origin (as in the textbook):

E.D.P. has made Psychology more interesting to me. My mind starts ticking now and I start relating my ordinary life to Psychology - before E.D.P. the course felt very separate from my own life.

Four students (13%) made critical comments. They stated that the programme only increased their enjoyment of Psychology for some but not all sections of the course and also requested more activities and projects of a practical, applied nature.

Three students (9%) claimed that the programme increased their enjoyment by providing a focus to the Psychology 120 course and two (6%) considered the tutorials a useful supplement to the lectures, extending their knowledge of Psychology beyond that provided in lectures. One student (3%) claimed that the programme had impacted not only on his enjoyment of Psychology but also that of other courses too. These results are summarised below:

Graph 8.26.   Subjects' opinions regarding the aim of making Psychology more enjoyable

♦ The aim of adopting a democratic, student-centred approach to group functioning:

Thirty two responses were given in relation to this topic, of which 27 (84%) were positive comments and five (16%) criticisms. Twenty one comments (66%) reflected the theme of student empowerment and participation in determining the direction of the programme:

> *Most topics dealt with came from the students, not from a predetermined, superimposed structure.*

> *Jacqui works at our level. She asks questions back to us rather than telling us the answers. Therefore the students guide the process.*

Subjects valued the fact that the mode of teaching was not didactic, but rather they were encouraged to discover solutions to their difficulties for themselves, through discussion:

> *In my other courses tuts are formal. The tutor is the expert and you take from them rather than sharing ideas with the group. Here the more you talk, the more you gain. Here I feel an expert - I know what I'm talking about.*

The theme of group discussion and participation was mentioned by six participants (19%). They valued the fact that participation was encouraged and that everyone contributed to the success of the programme through discussion. Being given responsibility for the direction of the programme resulted not only in greater feelings of control over learning but also impacted positively on academic performance as students had to prepare for the discussions.

You feel guilty if you haven't done the work, so you owe it to the group to pull your weight. If you haven't prepared you're taking more from the group than you're giving back.

Finally five respondents (15%) mentioned limits to student control arguing that sometimes the tutor's expertise seemed more valuable than students' knowledge:

There's a limit to how far we can control what happens in the tuts. Jacqui's knowledge benefits us so she has to keep us on track otherwise we get sidetracked too easily.

These respondents also mentioned the tension between becoming empowered, and course revision, best achieved by having the course re-taught, but which would allow students to remain passive. Results from this section are summarised below:

Graph 8.27.   Opinions regarding the aim of adopting a student-centred teaching methodology
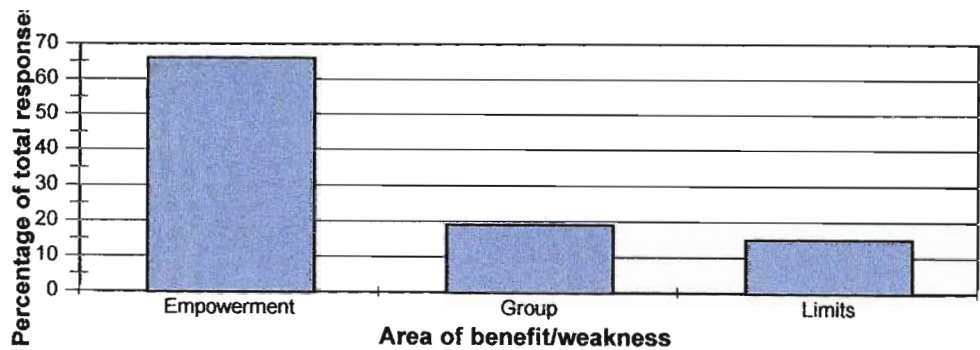
KEY:	
Empowerment:	*Programme was successful as a result of being student-led and allowing for student empowerment*
Group:	*Programme was student-centred as everyone was encouraged to participate and contribute to discussion*
Limits:	*Limits to the extent to which students could control the programme*

8.3.2.1.3.   Focus on empowerment and the impact thereof on study behaviour:

The third topic explored the programme's focus on empowerment, and the impact this had had on academic performance as well as other aspects of functioning at university. Fifty nine of the 76 responses given in response to this topic (78%) were positive comments and seventeen (22%) were criticisms. Twenty students (26%) claimed that the focus on empowerment had boosted their confidence and ability to express an opinion and contribute to group discussion:

In the first semester I went to the departmental tuts just to listen, but now I express opinions and ask questions when I need to.

Many referred to greater feelings of assertiveness, resulting in an ability to more freely approach lecturers and tutors for help rather than ignoring a problem or relying solely on the empowerment programme tutor with whom they felt comfortable:

The empowerment work was very helpful. Without it I felt afraid to confront white lecturers. Now I feel more confident.

Fourteen students (18%) claimed that the focus on empowerment had increased their enthusiasm and enjoyment of Psychology. Two of these students claimed the empowerment work had motivated them to persevere when they had considered dropping Psychology.

Thirteen students (17%) claimed that becoming empowered had led to a set of skills which impacted positively on their performance in other disciplines and their adaptation to university:

Empowerment is a useful life skill. It doesn't only help us in Psychology but in all aspects of university life.

I feel more comfortable in the university environment now - I feel confident that I am important and I have a right to be here.

These students had also gained the confidence to approach lecturers in all of their disciplines. Sometimes this confidence helped not only themselves but other students as well:

> *I once had a problem in ......(other course) as the tutor didn't give my work back.*
> *Learning about empowerment here made me ask for my work back. So not only I got*
> *my work back but the other students benefited too.*

> *In .... I couldn't see the value of the readings in the tuts, so I spoke to the lecturer*
> *and next year they're changing the system - so I helped the other students.*

They also felt more likely to take responsibility for problems in both their personal and academic life, thus impacting on all aspects of self development:

> *I had a problem with noise in res when I was trying to learn. Before I would just*
> *accept it, or worry about it. Now I know how to deal with it. I had the strength because*
> *I'd become empowered to go to the warden and do something about it.*

Twelve students (16%) focussed on the issue of responsibility and control, claiming that they were no longer passive, but rather took responsibility for their learning:

> *Empowerment has made me take greater responsibility. I now know no one can make*
> *me work - I have to do it myself, so I have greater control over my work.*

> *Now that I'm empowered I can look at the first class test which I failed and say "Where*
> *did I go wrong?" Before I was just passive, but now I review where I went wrong.*

Twelve respondents (16%) made critical comments. Some stated that as empowerment was important to their adaptation to university it should have been covered sooner in the year. Others felt that a more direct approach should have been adopted, teaching them practical skills for how to be empowered:

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It wasn't a clear enough revelation to make me change - I still feel embarrassed if I have to approach certain people.

Others felt that the effects of the empowerment work were limited as some staff members remained intimidating and unapproachable:

I feel empowered to stand up for myself now. But I think the department still treats students in a racist manner. We are still pigeonholed according to our race.

Empowerment is important, yet old lecturers don't understand the students' perspective. The lecturers also need to be empowered.

Finally, five students (7%) claimed that the focus on empowerment had little or no effect as they did not consider themselves disempowered before the programme began.

These results are summarised below:

Graph 8.28.   Subjects' opinions regarding the programme's focus on empowerment
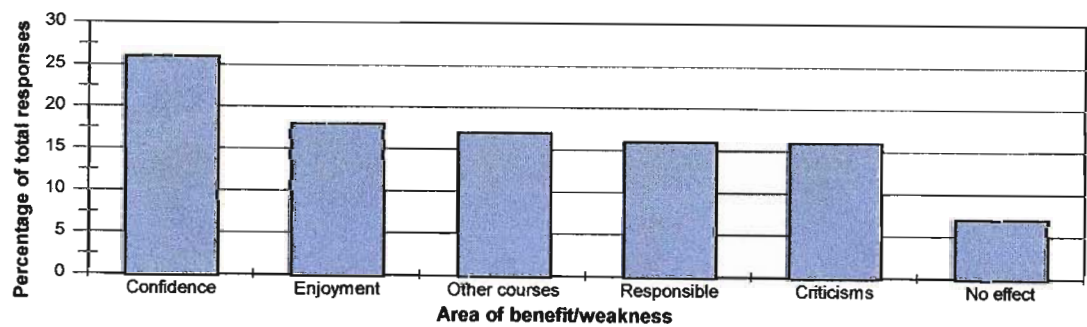
KEY:	
Confidence:	Effect of empowerment focus in boosting confidence and assertiveness
Enjoyment:	Effect of empowerment focus in increasing enjoyment of Psychology
Other courses:	Wider benefits of empowerment focus in improving performance in other disciplines
Responsible:	Effect of empowerment focus in increasing responsibility for learning
Criticisms:	Criticisms/weaknesses/flaws in relation to programme's empowerment focus
No effect:	Empowerment focus had no effect on respondent

8.3.2.1.4.   Opinions concerning readings, notes, revision exercises and other handouts:

This section of the discussion explored respondents' opinions concerning the readings, handouts and revision exercises given to participants. Twenty eight of the thirty responses given (93%) referred to the usefulness of the handouts, while two responses (7%) were criticisms of the use of handouts in the programme.

Eleven respondents (37%) mentioned the value of the handouts to their studying, while seven (23%) claimed that they increased the relevance of Psychology to students' own context:

> *The handouts showed me that Psychology's not isolated in the university. What we're doing in Psychology happens in society. It's not just a subject to be passed for a degree - because of E.D.P. I can see Psychology's relation to real life.*

> *The handouts give us greater experience of Psychology as it applied to South Africa. The textbook examples are very American, but because of the E.D.P. readings I can now relate the textbook to my own experiences.*

Six respondents (20%) stated that the handouts clarified the textbook and provide a sense of focus to the course and four (13%) claimed that they increased their enjoyment of Psychology:

> *In lectures I had a tense feeling because I have to read the book for exams. Now I read the book like I would a magazine, for enjoyment, so I'm enjoying the course much more.*

Finally two respondents (7%) criticised the use of handouts stating that tests should have been used to compel students to make use of the handouts given. These results are summarised in the following graph:

Graph 8.29.   Opinions regarding the usefulness of handouts in the programme
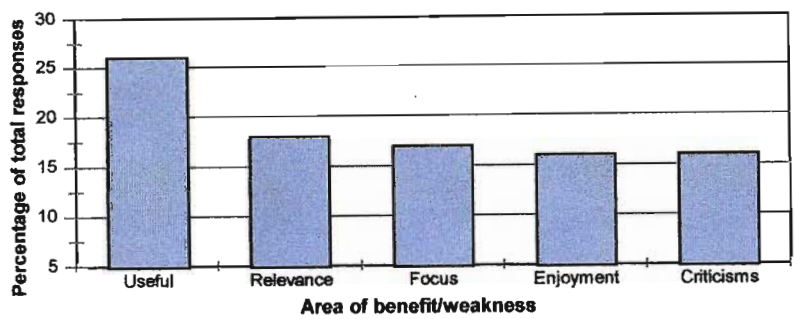
KEY:	
Useful:	Handouts were considered useful to study behaviour
Relevance:	Handouts increased the relevance of Psychology to students' experiences
Focus:	Handouts provided a sense of focus and clarity to the textbook
Enjoyment:	Handouts increased students' enjoyment of Psychology
Criticisms:	Criticisms/ weaknesses and flaws in relation to use of handouts

8.3.2.1.5.   Efficacy of content areas covered to students' academic needs:

The fifth area of discussion focussed on how useful students found the content areas covered in terms of their specific academic needs. Of the 32 responses given, 24 (75%) were positive responses and eight were negative ones (25%).

Nine respondents (28%) claimed that the programme provided a sense of focus and clarity to Psychology and helped them determine the relative importance of aspects of the course:

Coming from E.D.P. I have a clearer sense of vision about the course and what is important than from the lectures.

Eight respondents (25%) made critical comments, claiming that several areas needed greater coverage and thus the programme should have been offered more than once a week:

At times it felt a little bitty - with only one session a week you couldn't get stuck into anything in detail.

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They also considered some areas too theoretical and difficult to apply in practice:

> *A few parts were too ideal, and not always practical. Like the session on time management - it interferes with my old way of doing things, so it takes time for me to change my ways.*

Two of these respondents felt that some of the academic skills covered in the programme were not relevant to their needs as they had covered them in other courses or at school.

Six respondents (19%) found all areas covered useful and relevant to their needs. Four respondents (13%) valued the focus on independent learning and three (9%) valued the fact that the programme supplemented and extended rather than re-taught lecture content, as was the case in some of their other disciplines. Finally two respondents (6%) made equivocal comments that could not be categorised.

These findings are summarised as follows:

Graph 8.30.   Opinions regarding how useful content covered was to students' needs
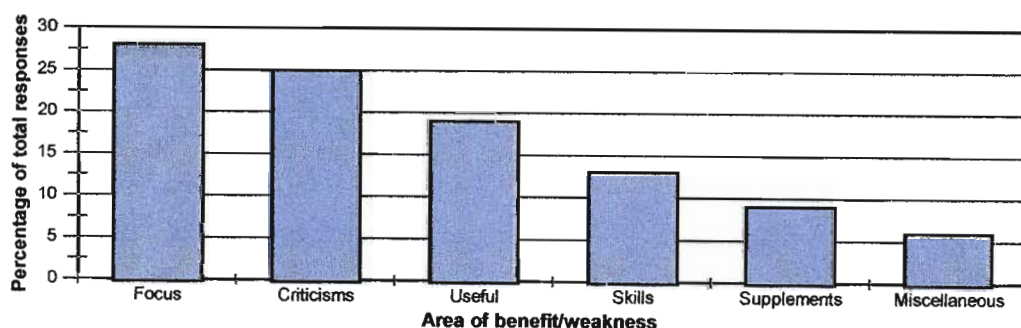
KEY:	
Focus:	*Programme provided a sense of focus and clarity to lectures*
Criticisms:	*Criticisms/weaknesses/flaws in relation to relevance of programme to students' needs*
Useful:	*All areas covered were useful and relevant to students' academic needs*
Skills:	*Usefulness of programme in developing independent learning rather than re-teaching lectures*
Supplements:	*Programme extends and supplements lecture content*
Miscellaneous:	*Miscellaneous responses*

8.3.2.1.6. Suggestions for future empowerment programme:

The final question asked respondents to suggest how the programme could be improved upon. Fourteen of these 34 comments (41%) related to the use of discussion and participation. Students felt that more time should be allocated to allow for discussion and debates:

Open ideas up to the group in debates. It's more empowering to debate ideas, because everyone is forced to participate. It forces you to come prepared.

Seven respondents (20%) felt that Psychology's relevance should be increased through applied, practical projects such as visits to the local mental hospital, talks on how Psychology could benefit various career paths and insights into the work of various types of psychologist.

Six comments (18%) related to racial and gender dynamics within the groups. Some respondents argued that unless groups had a balanced racial and gender composition, some students would dominate the discussion. Others disagreed:

You have to get to a stage where you can see past race and gender, to become people with a common goal.

Four responses (12%) focussed on practical matters related to the running of tutorials, such as the need for more time to allow for thorough coverage of topics and the venue used:

If we're working in room 36 there is more tension - if you come in late and there is no chair, everyone looks at you. The seminar room is much better because the chairs are arranged in a semi-circle.

These students also felt that the programme's success depended on characteristics of the tutor:

Jacqui is very motivating. She never says our answers are wrong. That is very painful when people say that, it makes us feel stupid. She says we're on the right track, even if the answer is not right, so we're encouraged to try again.

Finally one respondent (3%) felt that more time should be devoted to course revision and two (6%) made ambiguous comments. The above results are summarised as follows:

Graph 8.31.   Students' suggestions for improvements to the programme
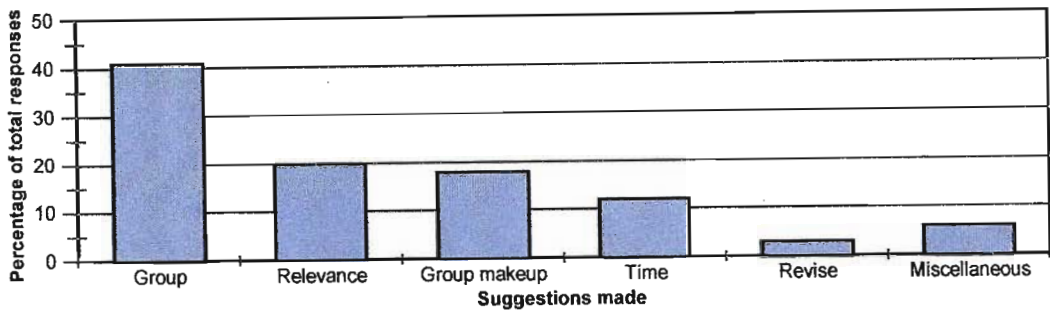
	KEY:
Group:	More opportunities should be provided for group discussion and participation
Relevance:	Practical projects should be used to increase Psychology's relevance
Group Make-up:	Comments related to group's racial and gender composition
Time:	Practical issues related to time, venue and tutor
Revise:	More time should be allocated for course revision
Miscellaneous:	Miscellaneous comments

8.3.2.2.   Themes covered across all six questions:

An attempt was made to explore themes common to all six topics covered in the discussion. In total, 405 ideas were expressed in the four discussion groups. Three hundred and twenty seven of these (81%) expressed positive, favourable views towards the programme and 78 ideas (19%) were negative criticisms or suggestions for improvement of the programme.

A total of eleven themes were expressed. The most common theme related to the benefits of the empowerment focus of the programme and the democratic, student-led methodology adopted. This idea received 103 mentions (26% of the total number of ideas expressed). The second most common theme included critical comments and suggestions for improvement, and received 78 mentions (19%). (The high number of criticisms is partly a result of question five which specifically elicited critical comments and suggestions for improvement).

Forty nine subjects (12%) stated that their enthusiasm and enjoyment of Psychology had increased after attending the programme. Thirty three ideas (8%) centred on the relationship between this programme and respondents' other courses. In particular respondents stated that this programme seemed more useful than academic development offerings in other disciplines and emphasised the beneficial impact of this programme on performance in other disciplines.

Thirty three responses (8%) explored the positive impact of the programme on academic performance in Psychology and the benefits of revising course content in the programme. A further 33 respondents (8%) claimed that the programme gave a sense of focus and clarity to Psychology, allowing them to determine the relative importance of lecture content.

Thirty one respondents (8%) emphasised the value of attending to their studying. Sixteen (4%) stressed the benefits derived from debates, group discussion and participation. Fifteen subjects (4%) suggested that the programme had increased Psychology's relevance to their own experiences. Four respondents (2%) valued the academic skills and learning strategies they had developed, and finally two (1%) respondents made comments that could not be categorised.

These themes are summarised in the following graph:

Graph 8.32.   Themes covered across all six discussion topics

When the 78 criticisms were analysed, similarities were identified, resulting in the identification of eight themes. The most common criticism, mentioned 16 times (21%) related to the focus on empowerment. These criticisms included the view that the course focussed too heavily on empowerment, that limits existed to the expression of one's empowerment and that the empowerment work had little or no impact on a respondent's behaviour.

Criticisms related to insufficient use of group discussion and suggestions to increase participation received 15 mentions (19%). The third most common theme, receiving 14 mentions (18%) included suggestions for activities of an applied nature, such as trips to mental hospitals or research projects. Practical issues related to time and venue received 12 mentions (15%). Most of these focussed on the need to allocate more time for tutorials to allow for in-depth discussion of issues.

Eight respondents (10%) felt that more time should have been devoted to course revision. Seven (9%) expressed some difficulty with the racial and/or gender composition of the group and the need for a racial and gender balance. Four respondents (5%) made ambiguous comments, and two (3%) felt that certain aspects should have been dropped from the programme as they had been covered in other disciplines or at school.

These results are summarised below:

Graph 8.33. Critical comments and suggestions for improvement to the programme
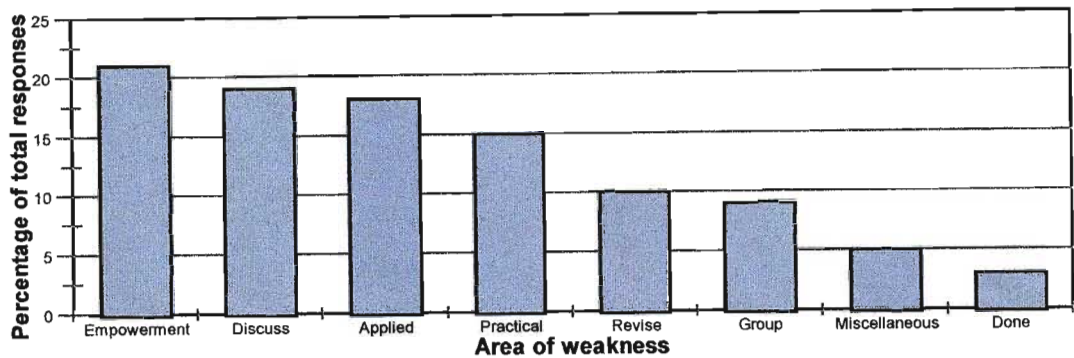
KEY:	
Empowerment:	*Criticisms of programme's focus on empowerment*
Discuss:	*Criticisms related to use of group discussion and suggestions to increase participation*
Applied:	*Suggestions for applied, practical projects*
Practical:	*Issues related to use of time and venue*
Revise:	*Need for more course revision*
Group:	*Issues related to racial and gender composition of group*
Miscellaneous:	*Miscellaneous comments*
Done:	*View that certain topics had been covered previously and should be dropped*

To summarise, the benefits of the empowerment programme are clearly demonstrated, both in terms of a significant impact on academic performance, and in terms of participants' attitudes towards the programme. Benefits highlighted in the evaluation questionnaire and focus group discussions included access to course revision, leading to an improvement in academic performance, and the opportunity to gain in confidence, control and self esteem, thus elevating participants' sense of empowerment. Further quantifiable differences in aspects of academic empowerment, between participants in this programme and non-participants, were found using the empowerment questionnaire, to be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER NINE: RESULTS OF THE EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONNAIRE:

9.1. PILOT STUDY:

The empowerment questionnaire was piloted on 40 second year Psychology students, ranging in age from 18 to 34, with a mean age of 21.08 and a standard deviation of 3.75. Twenty one subjects had attended the academic development programme offered in the Psychology department in 1993 (consisting of weekly revision tutorials). Further details regarding the demographic profile of these subjects can be found in Table 7.7 in chapter seven.

9.1.1. Reliability:

Alpha reliability coefficients for the ten sub-scales of the empowerment questionnaire, as well as the whole questionnaire yielded the following results:

Table 9.1.   Alpha reliability coefficients - pilot study (N = 40)

SCALE:	NUMBER OF ITEMS:	RELIABILITY:
Control:	10	0.5655
Active Learning:	7	0.6506
Helplessness:	5	0.3552
Motivation:	14	0.6924
Assertiveness:	12	0.7917
Power:	9	0.4939
Co-operation:	7	0.3043
Autonomous Learning:	12	0.5366
Time Management:	7	0.4429
Self Esteem:	8	0.6724
Overall:	70	0.8773

Item-total statistics were also calculated and used to indicate questions or scales that needed to be revised, as discussed in chapter seven.

9.2. FULL STUDY:

9.2.1. Demographic data:

Two hundred and eighty six subjects completed the empowerment questionnaire. (Due to missing data this number was reduced to between 253 and 286 for various parts of the analysis). Sixty six subjects were participants in the empowerment programme (E.M.P.) and 220 were not. Subjects' ages ranged from 17 to 45, with a mean age of 19.82 and a standard deviation of 3.66. There were 95 male and 191 female subjects. Eighty three subjects were black, 153 white and 50 Indian or Coloured.

When asked whether they belonged to any clubs, sports teams or societies at or outside of university, and held positions of leadership in any of these, 151 (53%) stated that they did not belong to any such groups, 62 subjects (22%) belonged to one such group, and 67 subjects (23%) belonged to one or more group and held a position of leadership. The remaining six subjects (2%) did not answer this question.

Subjects were also asked about their career plans. Ninety eight subjects (34%) were undecided about future plans, 55 subjects (19%) wished to follow a career in Psychology and 133 (47%) had career plans not directly related to the study of Psychology. Further details regarding subjects' demographic profile can be obtained from Tables 7.5 and 7.6. in chapter seven.

9.2.2. Reliability:

Alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for the ten sub-scales and total questionnaire, using all 286 subjects. The following results were found:

Table 9.2.   Alpha reliability coefficients - full study (N = 286)

SCALE:	NUMBER OF ITEMS:	RELIABILITY:
Control:	10	0.7337
Active Learning:	7	0.4777
Helplessness:	8	0.7033
Motivation:	11	0.5777
Assertiveness:	12	0.7555
Power:	10	0.5238
Co-operation:	8	0.4443
Autonomous Learning:	11	0.6719
Time Management:	9	0.7047
Self Esteem:	8	0.4551
Overall:	75	0.8668

The reliability of the total questionnaire can therefore be described as good, according to criteria established by Leary (1991). The reliability of the sub-scales is, however, somewhat weaker, probably as a result of the small number of items on each sub-scale.

9.2.3. Descriptive statistics:

Mean responses for each of the sub-scales and the whole questionnaire, mean responses per item, and standard deviations were then calculated, as follows:

Table 9.3.   Descriptive statistics - full study

SCALE:	SCALE MEAN:	MEAN PER ITEM:	STANDARD DEVIATION:
Control:	37.93	3.79	6.64
Active Learning:	23.45	3.35	4.19
Learned Helplessness:	26.17	3.27	5.85
Motivation	37.82	3.44	6.20
Assertiveness:	36.63	3.05	8.04
Power:	31.58	3.16	5.15
Co-operation:	24.67	3.08	4.72
Autonomous Learning:	35.56	3.23	6.91
Time Management:	26.41	2.93	6.43
Self Esteem:	29.81	3.73	3.92
Overall:	247.36	3.30	31.65

These results are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 9.1.   Mean per item, sub-scales and total questionnaire
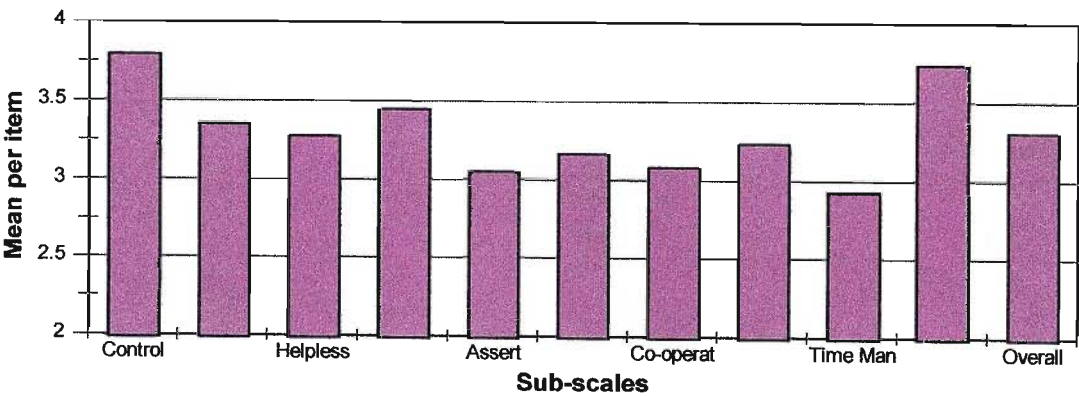
9.2.4. Analyses of variance:

To determine whether significant relationships existed between any of the independent variables used in this study (race, gender, class of pass in Psychology 110, participation in the empowerment programme and club membership) and subjects' scores on any of the ten sub-scales or whole questionnaire, a series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. Due to the large number of independent (five) and dependent measures (eleven) many possible ANOVAs could have been calculated using various combinations of the independent and dependent variables. I, however, used the ANOVA as an exploratory tool. Where it appeared from examination of group means that large differences existed between groups, an ANOVA was conducted to test the significance of these differences, without trying to present an exhaustive set of all possible ANOVAs on this data.

Four and five way analyses of variance were not possible considering the sample size (N=286), as there would have been too many empty cells in the analysis. One of the requirements of the ANOVA is that cells contain a minimum of five cases, a requirement that would not have been satisfied in a four or five way ANOVA on the present data set (Howell, 1995). (The variable race originally existed at three levels, gender at two, class of pass at six, E.M.P. attendance at two and clubs originally at five levels, resulting in a total of 360 cells to be split among only 286 cases). A series of two and three way ANOVA's were therefore conducted, with categories combined, where necessary, to ensure sufficiently large cell sizes.

The stability and robustness of the ANOVA is also affected by differences in group sizes as the test is far less effective when groups being compared are of very uneven sizes: "when we have a factorial design with unequal cell sizes, the calculations become considerably more difficult, and the interpretations can be very unclear. The best solution is not to have unequal n's" (Howell, 1995, p. 335). The two main groups being compared in this study (participants in the empowerment programme compared with non-participants) were of very uneven sizes (66 compared to 220). To overcome this problem, a random sample of 66 subjects was drawn from the 220 non-participants, and compared to the 59 participants for whom complete data existed, resulting in a revised sample of 125 for the ANOVAs. Although the risk of using a

sub-sample is that large amounts of data would be lost, this compromise was necessary to preserve some of the stability and robustness of the ANOVA test.

One further alteration was made to the data. As only two Indian subjects were included in the revised sample of 125 subjects, the category Indian/Coloured was combined with that of black subjects to ensure cell sizes of greater than five. Categories of pass were also reduced from six to four (0% - 49%, 50% - 59%, 60% - 67% and 68% - 100%), and categories of club membership were reduced from five to three (no membership, membership of one club, membership of two or more clubs or membership and leadership of one or more clubs).

With these revisions, the following ANOVAs were conducted on the sample of 125 subjects:

9.2.4.1.   Three way analysis of variance - scale x race x pass x E.M.P. attendance:

The first ANOVA to be conducted was a three way analysis of variance using race (white or black), pass (0% - 49%, 50% - 59%, 60% - 67% and 68% - 100%) and E.M.P. attendance as the independent variables, and scores on the ten sub-scales and total questionnaire as the dependent measures. Several significant main effects for the variables class of pass in Psychology 110 and E.M.P. attendance were found but none for race. A two way interaction between race and E.M.P. attendance was shown for the sub-scale co-operation. Due to the large amount of data generated, only significant results will be reported here.

Table 9.4.   Three way analysis of variance - scale x race x pass x E.M.P.

Scale:	Source of Variation:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:
Control:	Pass	524.253	174.751	3.400*
Active:	E.M.P.	328.638	328.638	17.533***
Helpless:	E.M.P.	557.741	557.741	19.601***
Motivation:	E.M.P.	502.709	502.709	13.559***
Assertiveness:	E.M.P.	1954.268	1954.268	24.848***
Power:	E.M.P.	513.304	513.304	15.522***

Scale:	Source of Variation:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:
Autonomous Learning:	Pass	587.222	195.741	4.947**
	E.M.P.	180.638	180.638	4.565*
Time Man:	Pass	318.717	106.239	2.907*
Esteem:	Pass	613.215	204.405	9.201***
	E.M.P.	215.994	215.994	9.722**
Co-operation:	Race x E.M.P.	75.032	75.032	4.211*
Overall:	Pass	13578.746	4526.249	4.883**
	E.M.P.	20602.646	20602.646	22.225***

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.005$ *** $p < 0.001$

For the scales showing significant pass relationships, the following means per scale and means per item were shown (one of the 125 subjects neglected to answer one of the relevant questions, reducing the sample to 124):

Table 9.5.   Mean per scale and mean per item - scales showing significant pass relations:

		0% - 49%	50% - 59%	60% - 67%	68% - 100%	Total:
N:		53	41	18	12	124
Control:	Scale mean:	37.3	37.7	42.5	43.7	38.8
	Item mean:	3.73	3.77	4.25	4.37	3.88
Autonomous Learning:	Scale mean:	35.0	35.5	39.6	43.7	36.6
	Item mean:	3.18	3.23	3.60	3.97	3.33
Time Management:	Scale mean:	26.9	25.5	27.0	31.3	26.9
	Item mean:	2.99	2.83	3.00	3.48	2.99
Self Esteem:	Scale mean:	26.9	29.4	32.4	36.5	29.5
	Item mean:	3.36	3.68	4.05	4.56	3.69
Overall:	Scale mean:	252.1	255.0	277.9	289.3	260.3
	Item mean:	3.36	3.40	3.71	3.86	3.47

These results are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 9.2.   Mean per item - scales showing significant pass relationships:
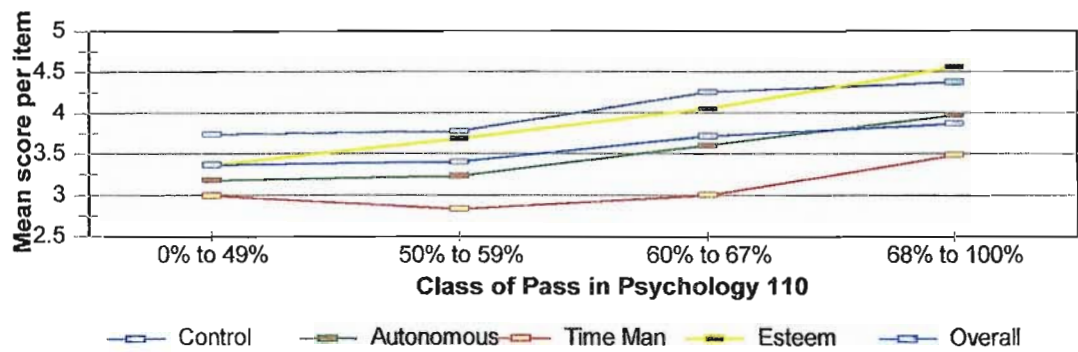
Participation in the E.M.P. was shown to be a significant variable for most of the scales, as shown in Table 9.4. The following means per scale and per item were shown for these scales:

Table 9.6.   Mean per scale and mean per item - scales showing significant E.M.P. relations

		E.M.P. Participants:	Non-participants:	Total:
N:		59	66	125
Active Learning:	Scale mean:	28.4	22.9	25.5
	Item mean:	4.05	3.27	3.64
Helplessness:	Scale mean:	31.2	24.9	27.9
	Item mean:	3.91	3.12	3.49
Motivation:	Scale mean:	42.8	36.6	39.5
	Item mean:	3.89	3.33	3.59
Assertiveness:	Scale mean:	45.7	35.0	40.0
	Item mean:	3.81	2.92	3.37
Power:	Scale mean:	38.0	30.8	34.2
	Item mean:	3.80	3.08	3.42
Autonomous Learning:	Scale mean:	40.2	33.4	36.6
	Item mean:	3.65	3.04	3.33
Self Esteem:	Scale mean:	32.0	27.2	29.5
	Item mean:	4.00	3.41	3.68
Overall:	Scale mean:	283.3	239.7	260.3
	Item mean:	3.78	3.20	3.47

These results are illustrated on the following graph:

Graph 9.3. Mean per item - scales showing significant E.M.P. relationships
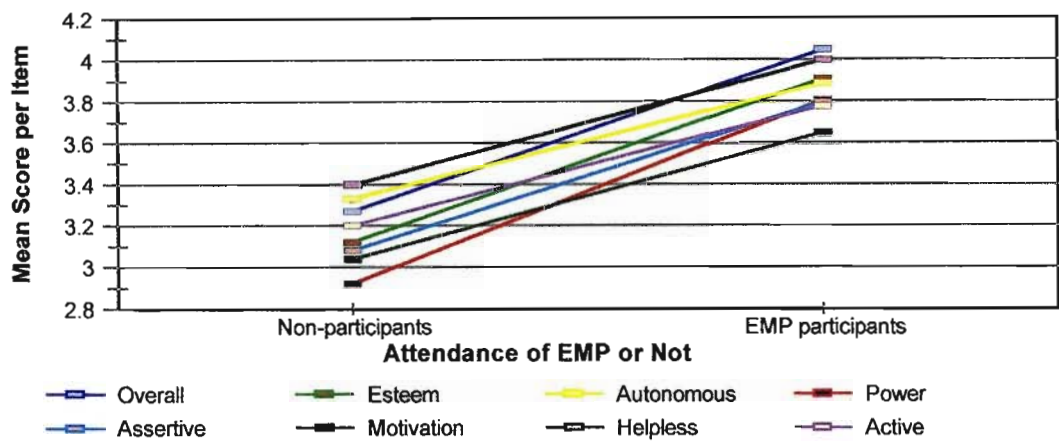
The sub-scale Co-operation was the only one to show an interaction between variables. An interaction occurred between the variables race and participation in the empowerment programme. Black students who attended the programme scored highest on the sub-scale (mean of 25.98 for the scale or 3.25 per item), followed by white students who did not attend the programme (mean of 25.60 or 3.20 per item), followed by white students who attended the programme (mean of 24.50 or 3.06 per item) and finally black students who did not attend (mean of 23.41 or 2.93 per item). These results are illustrated as follows:

Graph 9.4. Mean score per item x race x E.M.P. - co-operation scale
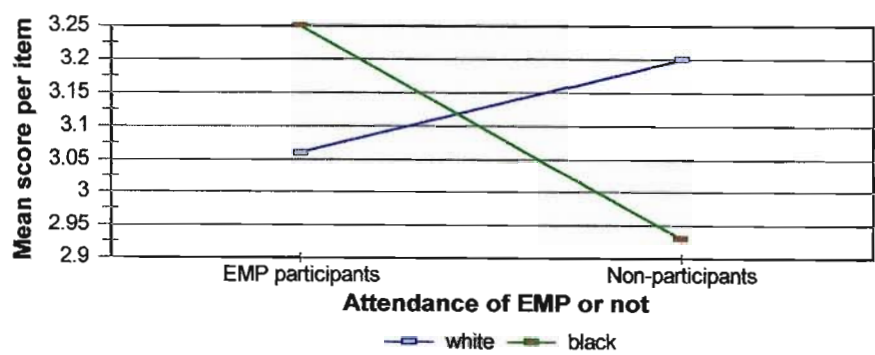
I had hoped to conduct a second three way ANOVA using the questionnaire total as the dependent measure and race (existing at two levels), clubs (at three levels) and pass (at four

levels) as the independent measures. This would have allowed me to explore the effect of subjects' membership of various clubs in interaction with their race and class of pass. When this was attempted, however, there were too many cells with fewer than five cases to make this viable. As it would have made the data meaningless to further reduce the three levels of the variable clubs or the four levels of the variable pass, the analysis was omitted from the study. Instead a one way ANOVA was conducted using questionnaire total as the dependent variable and club membership as the independent variable. This is described in section 9.2.4.3. below.

9.2.4.2. Two way analysis of variance - scale x gender x race:

To explore the effects of gender on subjects' questionnaire scores, a two way ANOVA was conducted, using the sub-scales and overall questionnaire scores as the dependent measures, and gender (existing at two levels) and race (two levels) as the independent measures. No significant gender results were found. Significant main effects were, however, found for race, for the sub-scales active learning, helplessness, power and time management:

Table 9.7.   Two way analysis of variance: scale x gender x race

Scale:	Source of Variation:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:
Active Learning:	Race	134.671	134.671	5.413*
Helplessness:	Race	269.890	269.890	7.156**
Power:	Race	205.455	205.455	4.623*
Time Management:	Race	339.561	339.561	8.189***

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p = 0.005$

For all of the above four scales the mean score for black students was higher than for white ones, as illustrated below:

Table 9.8.   Mean per scale and mean per item - scales showing significant race relations

		Black:	White:	Total:
N:		83	42	125
Active Learning:	Scale mean:	26.2	24.1	25.5
	Item mean:	3.74	3.44	3.64
Helplessness:	Scale mean:	28.9	26.0	27.9
	Item mean:	3.61	3.25	3.49
Power:	Scale mean:	35.1	32.4	34.2
	Item mean:	3.51	3.24	3.42
Time Management:	Scale mean:	28.0	24.7	26.9
	Item mean:	3.11	2.74	2.99

These results are summarised on the following graph:

Graph 9.5.   Mean score per item - scales showing significant race relationships
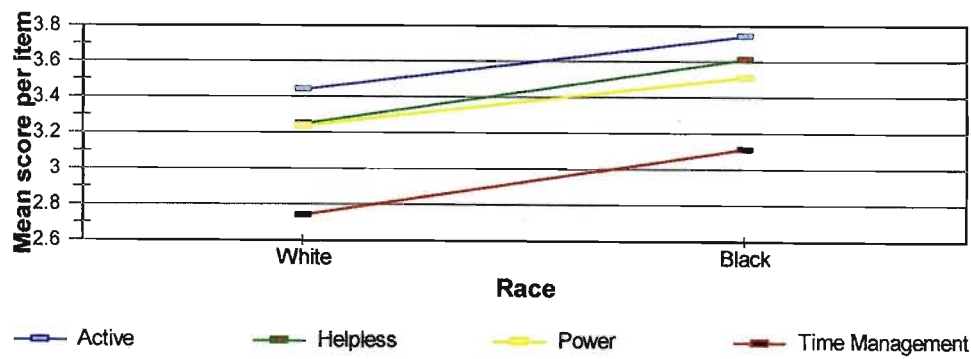
9.2.4.3.   **One way analysis of variance - overall questionnaire x clubs:**

To determine the effect of participation in clubs, societies or sports on empowerment, a one way ANOVA was performed using the overall questionnaire score as the dependent variable and club membership as the independent variable. This variable existed at three levels - no membership, membership of one club and membership of two or more clubs, or membership of one club with a leadership position. No significant results were found for this variable.

9.2.5. Correlations:

One of the goals of the empowerment questionnaire was to explore the nature of the relationship between empowerment and other concepts to which it has been linked in the literature, as described in chapter five, section 5.3. Correlations and factor analysis were therefore used to explore this relationship. Correlations determined the strength and direction of the relationship between the sub-scales on the questionnaire and total questionnaire score. Responses of the whole sample (N = 286) to every sub-scale and the whole questionnaire were therefore correlated with responses to every other sub-scale and the questionnaire as a whole. The scale and sub-scales were also correlated with subjects' class of pass in Psychology 110. This allowed me to determine whether my results were consistent with other studies exploring the relation between empowerment or other similar constructs and academic achievement, as discussed in chapter six, section 6.2.4. The following results were noted: (correlations with an absolute value greater than 0.5 are shaded).

Table 9.9.   Correlations - full study:

	Control:	Active:	Helpless:	Motivation:	Assertive:	Power:	Co-operation	Autonomous:	Time Man:	Self Esteem:	Overall:
Active:	0.19										
Helpless:	0.33	0.59									
Motivation:	0.29	0.65	0.59								
Assertive:	0.20	0.55	0.76	0.40							
Power:	0.21	0.38	0.50	0.26	0.60						
Co-operation:	-0.46	0.15	0.08	0.11	0.16	0.17					
Autonomous:	0.33	0.46	0.49	0.55	0.41	0.25	-0.02				
Time Man:	0.03	0.46	0.59	0.58	0.45	0.33	0.00	0.57			
Self Esteem:	0.45	0.40	0.46	0.43	0.32	0.27	0.08	0.29	0.21		
Overall:	0.50	0.73	0.80	0.75	0.74	0.59	0.26	0.68	0.64	0.61	
Pass:	0.25	0.08	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.10	0.08	0.32	0.10	0.06	0.28

9.2.6. <u>Factor analysis:</u>

The 286 subjects' responses to the questionnaire were subject to a factor analysis using the method of Principal Component Analysis followed by a Varimax rotation. This determined whether the items all measured the same construct (resulting in high correlations among all items) or whether separate factors could be identified in the data (resulting in clusters of close correlations among some items but which correlate weakly with other items) (Leary, 1991).

Twenty five factors resulted from the Principal Component Analysis with eigenvalues of greater than or equal to one. As this was considered too many factors to provide explanatory detail for a questionnaire of 75 items, the eigenvalues were examined for sufficient discontinuity to justify rotation of fewer than 25 factors (using a method similar to that adopted by Wilson, 1993). Up until factor four the gap between eigenvalues was relatively large (4.063 between factors 1 and 2), but between factors 4 and 5 and 5 and 6 the gap became very small (0.462 and 0.121) and so justified performing a four-factor Varimax rotation (Norusis, 1988 in Wilson, 1993).

The result of a factor analysis is a factor matrix correlating all questionnaire items with the identified factors (each of these correlations is termed a factor loading) (Leary, 1991). Researchers then examine these correlations to determine which items to include with each factor. They typically include items in a factor that load with a value greater than or equal to ±0.3, although some researchers, such as Short and Rinehart (1992) use more stringent cut-off points. For the purpose of this study, items were included that loaded at least ± 0.4 with a factor. This resulted in the inclusion of 42 items that correlated most highly with the four rotated factors.

Together the four factors accounted for 26.9% of the total variance. Eighteen items were included in the first factor, which accounted for 11.9% of the variance. These items had in common the contrast between an active or passive learning style. Some items referred to an active approach, involving goal setting, seeking help when in difficulty and viewing the course as a challenge to be mastered. Other items reflected a passive, defeatist and helpless approach.

The second factor accounted for 6.5% of the total variance and included ten items with a factor loading of greater than ±0.4. These items related to control and locus of control. Some of these items referred to a state of confidence and control over studies and a tendency to attribute success and failure as due to internal factors like ability or lack of hard work. Other items referred to a lack of control over studies and a view of success and failure as due to luck and other factors beyond one's control.

The seven items included in factor three all referred to extrinsic factors motivating and directing behaviour and accounted for 4.71% of the total variance. These items reflected a tendency to rely on external controls of studying, such as parental or teacher supervision, or a homework system, rather than inner, self direction of one's studies.

Finally the fourth factor accounted for 3.79% of the total variance and was termed social ability. The seven items included in this factor reflected a preference for group studying, an ability to approach others for help and familiarity with other students.

The 42 items included in the above four factors and the accompanying factor loadings are included in the following table:

Table 9.10.   Factor loadings for the 42 items included in factors one to four:

	FACTOR LOADING:
FACTOR ONE - ACTIVE VS PASSIVE LEARNING STYLES:	
Q4. I try to set regular and manageable goals for my studying	0.43
Q5. If I am invited out on an evening when I should be studying, I usually leave my work for another evening.	0.52
Q13. If I don't understand something in this course, I often leave it, hoping the problem will go away.	0.41
Q23. I often ask myself questions as I study, to test my understanding of the material.	0.42
Q24. If I don't understand something in this course, I am likely to ask the lecturer or E.D.P. tutor for help.	0.59
Q26. I ensure that I read ahead in Wade and Tavris before each day's lecture.	0.46
Q29. If I don't understand something in Psychology, I will ask the lecturer after the class.	0.45
Q32. I enjoy attending Psychology lectures and am enthusiastic about the course.	0.59
Q35. I enjoy this course because it challenges me to relate what I'm taught to my own experiences.	0.57
Q38. I try to devote a fixed amount of time to work on Psychology every week.	0.65

	FACTOR LOADING:
Q39. I usually enjoy the challenge of a new section in the Psychology course.	0.57
Q44. I often feel that there's no point in working hard in this course.	0.41
Q46. I am highly motivated to succeed in this course.	0.50
Q47. I enjoy discussing ideas in Psychology tutorials/E.D.P. tutorials.	0.56
Q60. If I don't understand something in this course, I try to find an answer as soon as possible.	0.47
Q63. When study leave arrives, my Psychology assignments and readings are all up to date.	0.47
Q71. I usually leave questions I have, or things I don't understand in Psychology 120, until I start revising for tests.	0.58
Q74. I try to stick to a regular study timetable every week.	0.47
FACTOR TWO - LOCUS OF CONTROL:	
Q1. The most likely reason a student might fail Psychology is that s/he hasn't worked hard enough.	0.47
Q22. There is a direct connection between how hard I study for Psychology and how well I do in the course.	0.59
Q28. If you work consistently in this course, you will do well in it.	0.62
Q30. This course is so difficult, I often feel like just giving up.	0.47
Q34. Succeeding in Psychology seems to depend more on good luck than on hard work.	0.61
Q36. The exams and tests for Psychology are so difficult that I have little control over my performance in the course.	0.60
Q40. I am confident of my ability to succeed in this course.	0.47
Q51. The reason students do badly in this course is that the tests are usually unfair.	0.60
Q57. By working consistently, I have control over how well I do in Psychology.	0.60
Q66. It's not worth trying to evaluate teaching in this department - no one listens to students.	0.48
FACTOR THREE - EXTRINSIC DIRECTION:	
Q14. It's difficult for me to organise my study time: at school we were told what to do and when to do it.	0.65
Q17. It's more important for me to please my parents by working hard than to please myself.	0.49
Q18. There are lots of things about myself that I would change if I could.	0.52
Q25. If it wasn't for exams, I doubt whether I would do much work in this course.	0.42
Q41. I struggle at university because there is no one to make me work hard.	0.60
Q54. My habit of putting off work for this course leaves me with too much to do at the end of the term.	0.55
Q58. My work in this course often makes me feel ashamed.	0.59
FACTOR FOUR - SOCIAL ABILITY:	
Q3. I feel comfortable approaching Psychology lecturers for help or to exchange ideas.	0.44
Q55. If I felt a Psychology lecturer had marked my assignment unfairly, I would confront him/her about this.	0.43
Q59. I do not know many other students in this course.	0.42
Q61. I am generally able to voice my opinion openly.	0.65
Q65. I usually revise for Psychology with other students.	0.42
Q72. If I am confused about something in this course, I have several friends who can help me.	0.63
Q73. I rarely have trouble finding a partner that I know at the practicals.	0.41

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The four factors were then subject to alpha reliability testing:

Table 9.11.   Alpha reliability coefficients - factors one to four:

FACTOR:	NO. ITEMS:	RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT:
1. Active vs Passive Learning Styles:	18	0.883
2. Locus of Control:	10	0.807
3. Extrinsic Direction:	7	0.604
4. Social Ability:	7	0.600
TOTAL F1 - F4:	42	0.861

9.2.7. Analysis of variance using the above four factors:

The final analyses performed on the questionnaire were two analyses of variance performed on the sub-sample of 125 subjects' scores for factors one to four. Due to missing data, the number of subjects included in this part of the analysis ranged from 109 to 119:

9.2.7.1.   Two way analysis of variance - F1 to F4 x race x E.M.P. attendance:

The first analysis of variance performed on the four factors used race (existing at two levels) and E.M.P. attendance (two levels) as independent variables and scores for the four factors as dependent measures. For factor one (active vs passive learning styles) significant main effects were found for race and E.M.P. attendance, and for factor three (extrinsic direction) a significant main effect was found for race. No effects were found for factors two and four.

Table 9.12.   Two way Analysis of Variance: F1 to F4 x Race x E.M.P.:

Factor:	Source of Variation:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:
F1:	E.M.P.	1504.483	1504.483	12.363*
F1:	Race	1256.458	1256.458	10.325**
F3:	Race	159.257	159.257	5.649***

* $p < 0.005$ ** $p = 0.001$ *** $p < 0.05$

For F1, subjects who attended the empowerment programme scored higher (mean of 68.34 or 3.80 per item, n = 64) than those who did not attend (mean 57.2 or 3.18 per item, n = 45). Black subjects also scored higher (mean 67.81 or 3.77 per item, n = 69) than white subjects did (mean 56.73 or 3.15 per item, n = 40). For F3 this pattern was reversed with white subjects scoring higher (mean 22.27 or 3.18 per item) than black ones (20.24 or 2.89 per item). These results are summarised on the following two graphs:

Graph 9.6.   Mean score per item x race - F1 and F3
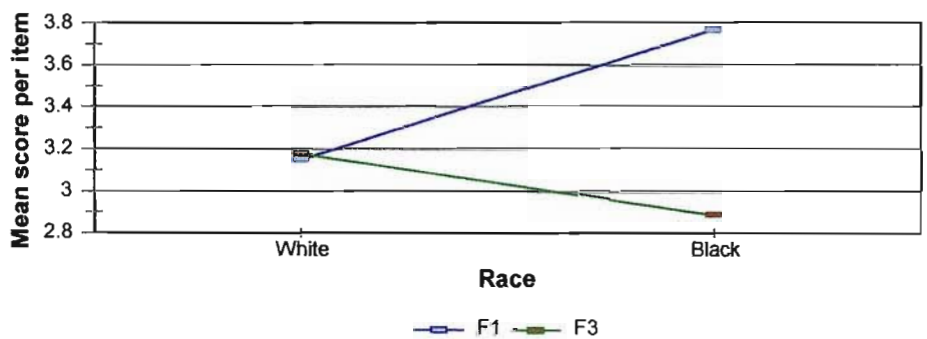
Graph 9.7.   Mean score per item x E.M.P. attendance - F1
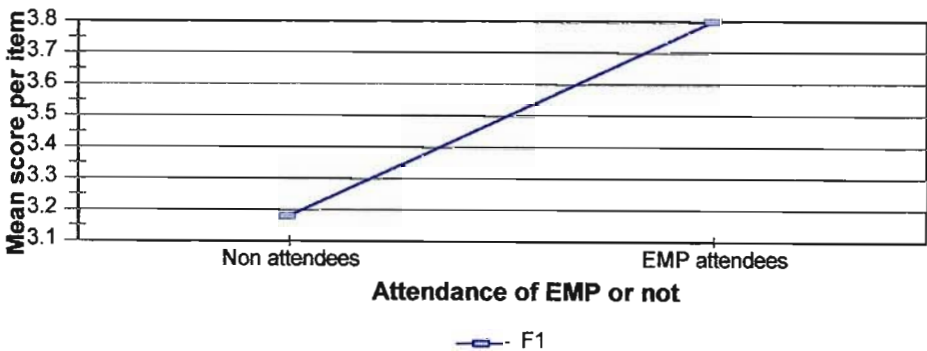
9.2.7.2.   One way analysis of variance - F1 to F4 x pass:

The final ANOVA performed on this data was a one way analysis of variance using subjects' class of pass in Psychology 110 (existing at four levels) as the independent variable and score on factors one to four as the dependent measure. Significant results were found for factors two (locus of control) and three (extrinsic direction).

Table 9.13.   One way analysis of variance: F1 to F4 x pass

Factor:	Sum of Squares:	Mean Square:	F:
F2:	677.494	225.831	4.216*
F3:	718.726	239.575	10.119**

* $p < 0.01$ ** $p < 0.001$

The following means per factor and means per item are associated with these results:

Table 9.14.   Mean per factor and mean per item - factors showing significant pass relations

		0% - 49%	50% - 59%	60% - 67%	68% - 100%	Total:
N:		8	40	35	29	112
F2:	Scale mean:	33.13	37.53	36.31	41.62	37.89
	Item mean:	3.31	3.75	3.63	4.16	3.79
F3:	Scale mean:	14.75	20.27	20.86	24.66	21.18
	Item mean:	2.11	2.90	2.98	3.52	3.03

These results are illustrated on the following graph:

Graph 9.8.   Mean per item x class of pass in Psychology 110 - F2 and F3
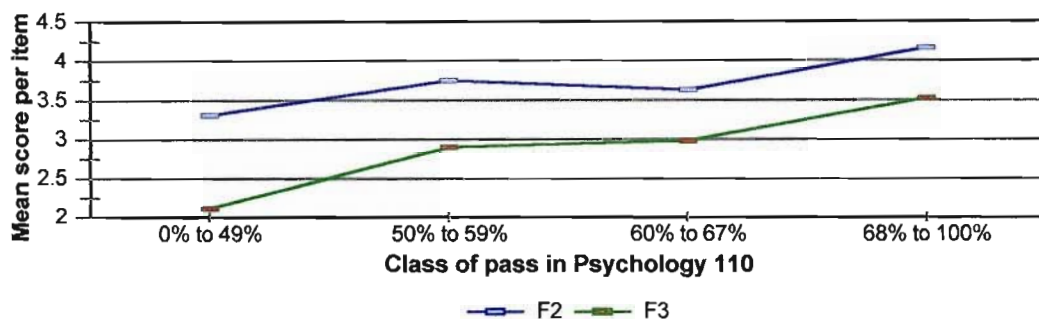
These results thus suggest a strong impact on empowerment levels as a result of participating in the empowerment programme, and an impact as a result of subjects' class of pass in Psychology 110. Race was found to have some impact, but gender and participation in extra-mural activities had no impact on empowerment. The following chapter will discuss the implications of these and other results.

CHAPTER TEN: DISCUSSION:

This study explored the application of the theories and methods of community psychology, and more particularly empowerment theory, to the area of academic development. As discussed in chapter three, black students face complex psycho-social, interpersonal and socio-political difficulties adapting to tertiary institutions, beyond the cognitive and linguistic problems that have traditionally formed the basis for academic development initiatives. This study therefore aimed to design, implement and evaluate a tutorial-based programme, based on empowerment theory, to address some of these difficulties.

The study also had a secondary aim. Although empowerment theory is the central theory of community psychology (Rappaport, 1987), the concept has been widely criticised for its lack of definitional clarity (Bandura, 1997 and Mulvey, 1988). With the exception of Wilson's Self Empowerment Index (1993) and Short and Rinehart's School Participant Empowerment Scale (1992), few attempts have been made to measure empowerment and quantify its relationship to similar concepts such as locus of control, learned helplessness or self esteem. This study, therefore, also attempted to design a reliable and valid measure of empowerment within the tertiary educational context and identify some of the variables to which it is causally linked.

Before discussing the findings of the previous two chapters, a note of caution must be made. Educational research, and especially educational evaluation is an area fraught with complexities. Academic outcomes can almost never be explained in terms of single factors but are rather due to the interaction between multiple cognitive, psycho-social, interpersonal and socio-political factors (Agar, 1992 and Hughes, 1987). The present study is also an example of applied, community research within a real world context, where multiple factors combine to influence any one behaviour (Kelly, 1986). For both of these reasons caution should be exercised when interpreting the following findings. Using the principles of action research results should be seen as providing partial explanations of some of the variables influencing educational outcomes, identified at a selected point in an ongoing process of empowerment, rather than as definitive answers (Winter, 1987).

10.1. RELATION OF RESULTS TO AIMS AND HYPOTHESES:

Results confirm that the three aims of the study were met. Firstly a tutorial programme based on the theory and practices of empowerment was designed and implemented using voluntary participants from the Psychology 120 class. This programme was subject to qualitative and quantitative evaluation, the results of which will be discussed below. The programme was then used as the basis for developing a set of recommendations for an empowering education.

The study also sought to develop a valid and reliable measure of academic empowerment. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.87, considered a good reliability for an educational measure, according to guidelines set by McDaniel (1994), and is comparable to the reliability of Wilson's Self Empowerment Index (1993) (0.88) and Short and Rinehart's School Participant Empowerment Scale (1992) (0.94). The scale can thus be considered a reliable measure. Factor analysis identified four factors on the scale which have much in common with Zimmerman's concept of psychological empowerment (1995), and thus the scale can also be considered a valid measure of empowerment (showing good construct validity).

Both hypotheses related to the empowerment programme were confirmed. Participants scored significantly higher final marks for Psychology 120 than participants in a revision programme. These students in turn did better than a control group, matched with empowerment programme participants in terms of race and class of pass in the first Psychology 110 test.

According to rating scales, open-ended questions and focus group discussions, participants responded positively to the empowerment programme. In the focus group discussions, for example, 81% of all ideas expressed were favourable responses to the programme. The most common theme focussed on the issue of student empowerment and the associated benefits in terms of greater confidence and control in relation to studying.

Three of the five hypotheses related to the empowerment questionnaire were confirmed. Empowerment programme participants scored significantly higher on the questionnaire than non-participants, while those with high marks in the Psychology 110 examination scored

higher than those who performed less well. No gender difference in results was expected or found. It was expected that white students would score higher on the questionnaire than black students, although this hypothesis was not confirmed. Students who participated in extra mural clubs and other activities were also expected to score higher than those who did not participate in such activities, but results failed to confirm this hypothesis.

10.2. SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION OF RESULTS:

10.2.1. Results of the empowerment programme evaluation:

10.2.1.1. Quantitative findings:

Participation in the empowerment programme had a clear effect on students' academic performance. Participants (group A) began the year with the lowest mean mark of the three groups for the first Psychology 110 test (44.38 compared to 49.54 for group B, who had attended revision classes, and 44.94 for the control group C, who did not attend any tutorial programme). By the end of the year, however, participants in the empowerment programme received significantly higher Psychology 120 final marks (mean of 58.45) than students in group B (mean of 57.35). Group C performed worst of the three groups (mean of 50.83).

The inclusion of two comparison groups allowed for the exclusion of several confounding variables as explanations for differences between the groups. Participants in groups A and B were presumably equally motivated to attend voluntary tutorials. The same tutor and venue were also used for both programmes as was the same small group, tutorial-based method of teaching. These factors can, therefore, be excluded as explanations for the difference in performance between groups A and B. Subjects in groups A and C were also matched for race and academic ability (measured as class of pass in Psychology 110) and attended the same Psychology 120 course and thus differences were not due to these variables. It thus seems likely that the higher performance of groups A and B than that of group C was due to the use of small group, tutorial-based teaching methods, while the higher performance of group A than that of group B was due to the specific effects of the programme's empowerment focus.

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A significant main effect for race was also found, with white students across all three groups performing best (mean of 65.65), followed by Indian and Coloured students (mean of 53.26) and finally black students (mean of 52.50). This pattern in performance is shown for most university courses (Agar, 1992 and Schroen *et al.*, 1994) and can be explained as due to some of the challenges facing black students, discussed in chapters two and three.

Other quantitative findings support the above pattern. At 96% the Psychology 120 pass rate for subjects in group A was considerably higher than that of group B (80%) or C (53%). This difference was even greater for black students. Ninety six percent of those in group A passed Psychology 120 compared to 75% of those in group B and 45% in group C. Significant linear trends were also shown for groups A and C with group A showing an improvement over time while group C showed a decline in performance.

As discussed in chapter seven (7.3.1.), few attempts have been made to quantitatively evaluate tutorial interventions in this country, making the task of relating these findings to those of other studies, a difficult one. Results, however, suggest an improvement on the few other local studies, most of which fail to find a difference in performance, between academic development programme participants and non-participants (Agar, 1988 and Mhlane, 1991). Agar (1988), however, reports on two University of the Witwatersrand courses, where academic support tutorials raised the performance of black students from 38% and 56% (before tutorials were introduced) to 51% and 68% for students attending these classes. The current study suggests an even bigger growth as the pass rate for black students in Psychology 100 rose from 18% in 1988 and 20% in 1989 (before academic development tutorials were introduced) (Sudworth 1994) to 96% for participants of the empowerment programme in 1994.

Results are similar to findings from the University of Missouri, Kansas City Supplemental Instruction programme (1992), which claims to raise the mean final course mark of participants by 10% over non-participants. Comparison of final marks for groups A and C showed a mean final mark of 7.6% higher for students in group A than that of group C. This effect was constant across all race groups. Black subjects in group A scored 7.6% higher, Indian and Coloured subjects 8.5% higher and white subjects scored 10.3% higher than the

equivalent race in group C. These findings are considerably better than those of Schroen *et al.* (1994), where black participants in a South African Supplemental Instruction programme performed worse in the final examination than black non-participants.

10.2.1.2.   Qualitative findings:

Responses to the focus group discussions and evaluation questionnaire were positive. Eighty one percent of the ideas expressed in the focus groups were favourable, and a mean score per item of 4.3 (out of a total of five) was found for the questionnaire. Over 90% of subjects agreed that the programme had met their expectations, helped them cope with Psychology and should continue to be offered to future students. Almost 90% claimed that it had boosted their self esteem, increased their academic performance and led to improved study behaviour as they became more organised, motivated and in control of their studies.

According to the evaluation questionnaire, revision of lectures, practicals and past test papers were the most useful areas of the programme, with over half of the subjects requesting that more revision be included. It was expected that this would be one of the most popular aspects of the programme as revision appears to be most directly related to academic performance and was the area students most wished to address in the initial needs assessment.

The most commonly expressed theme in the focus group discussions was the benefit derived from the programme's focus on empowerment, which was also rated the second most valuable aspect of the programme according to the evaluation questionnaire. Students claimed that they had gained a greater sense of control and responsibility towards their studies. Instead of passively expecting to fail they felt confident of succeeding in Psychology 120. They claimed that the benefits of the empowerment work were not limited to their studies in Psychology. Empowerment also impacted positively on their other courses and their adaptation to university in general, as a result of greater confidence, responsibility and assertiveness.

Students particularly valued the programme's participatory methodology. On the rating scales over 90% of respondents agreed that the programme was run in a democratic manner and that

it was adapted to suit students' needs. In the focus group discussions respondents claimed that this approach elevated this programme over academic development offerings in other disciplines. There, they claimed, tutors imposed a pre-determined structure and agenda on the classes and, mostly, re-taught the lecture course.

Another common theme to emerge was the importance of group discussion to the success of the programme. Over 90% of respondents on the evaluation questionnaire claimed they felt comfortable to share their problems with the group after attending the programme and agreed that sufficient opportunities for discussion had been provided. Students valued the interactive nature of the programme, in comparison with the impersonal, didactic nature of the large Psychology lectures. They also considered empowerment and group discussion to be linked. By contributing to discussion they became more confident and assertive, and gained a sense of mastery, and thus became more empowered.

Participants' enjoyment of Psychology appeared to also have increased. Over 90% of the responses to a rating scale and an open-ended question reported increased enthusiasm for Psychology as a result of attending this programme. This was attributed to an increased sense of mastery and control over the discipline and to attempts by the tutor to increase the relevance of the course to students' experiences. In turn, increased enjoyment led to improved academic performance as more effort was devoted to achieving success.

A number of critical comments and suggestions were made. Some of these focussed on the duration of the programme, with subjects arguing that there should have been more class time to allow for detailed coverage of the material and more discussion. They felt that empowerment requires intensive changes in habitual behaviours, and thus required more time to implement than was possible in a semester-long programme. This issue is an important one and highlights the tension inherent in this study's attempt to bring together the fields of academic development and empowerment. The problems of disadvantage discussed in chapter two suggest the need for immediate strategies to raise poor academic performance, of the kind traditionally proposed by academic development. Empowerment, on the other hand, is usually defined as a long-term, gradual process of development (Kieffer, 1984). Ideally therefore, the

programme should have run for a year or more, although practicalities did not permit this. Various strategies were thus used to increase the amount of time available. These included activities for self study, peer study groups and the allocation of different tasks to different groups. It also had to be acknowledged that this programme would lay the foundation for a process of long term development that would hopefully continue after the programme's end.

Other suggestions included the request for more discussion. A few students also referred to a slight unease between members of different race groups and the difficulties of getting all participants to contribute to discussions. Others, however, felt that the programme had helped them look beyond traditional racial and gender categories and develop a new group identity.

A difference of opinion was expressed concerning the course's focus on empowerment. Most students considered this one of the most valuable aspects of the course, but a few felt that it should have received less emphasis, as they had covered the issue on school leadership courses. A few students also found coverage of some of the academic skills to be unnecessary, claiming that these had been covered elsewhere. This issue suggests the presence of sub-groups of participants, with differing academic needs.

I hypothesised that these sub-groups were divided racially and according to academic ability, with white students and those of higher academic ability perhaps showing less enthusiasm about the empowerment and academic skills focus of the programme than black students and those of lower academic ability. The introductory empowerment, time management and test anxiety sessions, for example, were rated useful by 81%, 90% and 81% of black students respectively, but only 58%, 58% and 50% of white students.

These differences may be related to past experiences. As discussed in chapter two, the educational disadvantages and absence of school guidance programmes experienced by black learners coupled with their experiences of powerlessness at university (Coleman, 1993) may result in them being more likely to value a programme aimed at overcoming this disempowerment. White students, on the other hand, may be less enthusiastic as they are more likely to have attended leadership or life skills courses at school.

Although marked differences were found in response to individual questions, ANOVAs on the six sub-scales and overall questionnaire did not prove significant for race or academic ability. This was, however, to be expected considering the variety of questions included in each sub-scale, most of which showed no differences according to race or academic ability.

Attempts to compare the above qualitative findings to other studies are hampered by the paucity of evaluation studies, as mentioned above (Mhlane, 1991). The programme does, however, fare better than Pandor's (1991) evaluation of a generalised linguistic and academic skills course. Results suggested that students considered this decontextualised course irrelevant to their mainstream disciplines, and failed to transfer learnings to these disciplines, a common problem in academic development programmes (Agar, 1990 and Starfield and Hart, 1991). A common theme to emerge from the focus group discussions for this study, however, was the beneficial impact of the programme on performance in other disciplines as a result of a sense of control over all studies and greater assertiveness to approach lecturers for help.

It appeared that black students responded more favourably to this programme than to those described by Tisani (1988). Her evaluation of tutorial programmes at a historically white university revealed high levels of anxiety and poor participation among black students and inhibiting, rigid tutors. Students in this programme, on the other hand, valued its participatory nature, with 92% of subjects claiming they felt comfortable to share their problems in the group and 91% that enough opportunity was provided for discussion. Ninety five percent also agreed that the programme was adapted to suit their needs and run in a democratic manner.

Lloyd's initial evaluation of the Mathematics programme described in chapter four (4.3.2) revealed similarly poor participation by black students, to that described by Tisani (1988). He therefore broke tasks into smaller components, discussed in groups, with answers fed back to the larger group (a strategy used in this programme). Students were also made responsible for identifying solutions, with the tutor facilitating discussion. Results revealed that this approach was far more successful. As in the current evaluation, students valued the emphasis on discussion, and claimed they had grown in confidence by attending the programme. They also claimed that it had had a beneficial impact on their academic performance (Lloyd, 1987).

The Supplemental Instruction Programme (University of Missouri, Kansas City, 1992) and Science Foundation Programme (Grayson, 1994) report similar findings to the current study. Originators of Supplemental Instruction claim that its success also depends on student responsibility for learning and equal power relations between tutor and students. The Science Foundation Programme (Grayson, 1994) emphasises increased confidence and control of learning, by beginning with familiar material and providing many opportunities for assessment and feedback. The empowerment programme used this strategy, providing weekly revision exercises with feedback, to allow for a growing sense of mastery. Like the empowerment programme, the Science Foundation Programme also provides training in psycho-social factors necessary to academic success, such as assertiveness, goal setting and time management (Barnsley, 1992). Evaluation results suggest that students gain a sense of confidence, and claim to have grown both academically and personally (Grayson, 1994).

Some of the problems highlighted by the programme evaluation, were also found in other studies. The issue of time pressures, for example, was a common problem. In Lloyd's evaluation of the Mathematics programme, for example, tutors referred to the tension between sufficient time for in-depth discussion, and keeping up with the pace of the lecture course (Lloyd, 1987). A few students also mentioned unease between members of different race groups, and the difficulties of getting all group members to contribute to discussions. Although participation in the current programme was generally good, poor participation of black students is a common problem in tutorial programmes as discussed above.

Poor participation can be explained as due to feelings of unease between members of different race groups and to the educational backgrounds of black and white students. Black students's former educational experiences are of huge classes, forcing teachers to lecture with little or no opportunity for discussion. This creates a "culture of silence" (Tisani, 1988), as students are unfamiliar with the tutorial format and lack the confidence to participate in discussions. White students, on the other hand, have experienced smaller class groups, which offer more opportunity for discussion, increasing their confidence and leading them to, at times, dominate discussions. Thus black students' passivity and white students' dominance reinforces power imbalances between the groups, intensifying racial tensions.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) provides a solution to these tensions as illustrated in the following comment from one of the focus group participants:

You have to get to a stage where you can see past race and gender, to become people with a common goal.

Applying Social Identity Theory to this context, different levels of participation by black and white students reinforce intergroup stereotypes and entrench group boundaries, increasing the likelihood of group members categorising each other along racial dimensions. Thus white students are labelled as aggressive and domineering by black students, who are in turn, considered passive, lazy and ignorant by white students.

The solution to this problem, is to overcome the tendency to categorise racially and build a new group identity, by encouraging co-operation and friendships in settings where mastery is likely. In the empowerment programme, games, exercises and name tags were used so that students got to know one another. Discussion groups mixed races and genders in an attempt to break existing barriers. Participants were made responsible for finding their own solutions within the group rather than relying on the tutor's expertise. The Jigsaw technique (Aronson *et al.*, 1978) was also used to develop a sense of mastery and co-operation. Emphasis was also placed on students' shared identity as a group of empowered students taking responsibility for their learning, thus building a new group identity.

It thus appears from both qualitative and quantitative evaluation that the empowerment programme achieved its aims. Evidence of a quantitative effect on academic performance, both in terms of final course marks and an improvement over the semester, is clearly apparent. Qualitative evidence also suggests that participants attributed the increase in performance partly to access to course revision, but also to the focus on empowerment which resulted in increased confidence, greater enjoyment of the course and a growing sense of control. This therefore highlights the impact of psycho-social factors on academic performance.

10.2.2. <u>Empowerment questionnaire:</u>

As mentioned in section 10.1, the empowerment questionnaire can be considered a reliable measure of empowerment, with an overall reliability of 0.87, very similar to that of other measures of academic empowerment (Wilson, 1993 and Short and Rinehart, 1992). The reliability of the sub-scales was, however, much lower, ranging from 0.44 for the co-operation scale to 0.76 for the assertiveness scale. This is probably affected by the number of items on the sub-scales as the three sub-scales with the lowest reliability also had the fewest items, each consisting of between seven and eight items. Low reliability for sub-scales is not unique to this study. Several other studies of empowerment report reasonable reliability for the overall measure used, but reliabilities of between 0.5 and 0.8 for sub-scales (Levine, 1986 in Holmbeck and Wandrei, 1993; Maton and Rappaport, 1984 and Zimmerman *et al.*, 1992).

The mean score per item for the questionnaire was 3.3. Highest means per item were found for control (3.79) and self esteem (3.73). This is possibly due to the nature of the sample. University students have been selected as a result of their school achievements, and thus may have a high self esteem (Hansford and Hattie, 1982). As they have succeeded in the past, they perhaps also view success as a result of their own ability, and thus show high control scores.

Lowest means per item were found for the scales assertiveness (3.05) and time management (2.93). The latter may be linked to the change from teacher-managed learning and a homework system at school, to self-management of learning at university. Thus first year students may experience some difficulty managing their time when faced with an increased volume of work and the absence of a teacher directing their studies. The low assertiveness mean may be due to lack of confidence, poor interracial communication, and anxiety at participating in discussions (Barnsley, 1992; Dammarell, 1988; Lea, 1987 and Tisani, 1988).

10.2.2.1.   Causal influences on empowerment: explanation of results:

The results of the analysis of variance revealed significantly higher overall scores and scores on seven of the sub-scales, for participants in the empowerment programme. Students of

higher academic ability also performed better overall and on four of the sub-scales than those of lower academic ability. No significant differences were found according to gender or participation in extra-mural activities. No overall racial differences were found, although black students scored significantly higher than white ones on four sub-scales.

The finding of higher overall mean scores for participants of the empowerment programme suggests that the programme's aim of empowering students to take control of their studying, was realised. Questionnaire data was collected towards the end of the semester, by which time participants had been taught techniques for behaving in an empowered manner and had a chance to practice these techniques inside and out of the classroom. It would thus appear that participation in the empowerment programme resulted in them scoring higher on the empowerment questionnaire than students who did not attend the programme.

The possibility does exist that participants were more empowered than the rest of the class before attending the programme. As a pre- and post-test methodology was not used, initial empowerment levels cannot be eliminated as a confounding variable. On the evaluation questionnaire, however, 97% of participants agreed that their ability to take responsibility for their studies had increased and 94% that their feelings of self control over their studies had grown as a result of the programme's empowerment focus. In the focus group discussions respondents also referred to a growth in confidence, control and empowerment as a result of attending this programme, as indicated in the following comment:

> It [the empowerment focus] was very helpful. Without it I felt afraid to confront white lecturers. Now I feel more confident and I'm able to ask for help when I need to.

The possibility of data bias in self report measures, such as those used in the evaluation (Cowen and Gesten, 1980) limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the data. Taken together, however, results of the empowerment questionnaire and evaluation suggest that it was the programme, rather than pre-existing empowerment levels that resulted in significant differences in empowerment between participants and non-participants.

Participants also scored significantly higher on the active and autonomous learning scales than non-participants, referring to use of techniques such as goal setting, summarising and deep level comprehension, and independent study. Responses to the evaluation, again suggest that participation in the programme elevated these skills. Over 90% of respondents agreed that participation in this programme had increased their ability to work independently and that they had developed academic skills needed to succeed in Psychology. Focus group respondents also referred to an increase in their ability to work independently:

> *It's helped me to be responsible in finding my own solutions. I've learned that I must be active in my own learning.*

One possible confounding variable that was not eliminated in the present study was participation in other academic development offerings. Participants in a programme such as this one, commonly attend similar programmes in other disciplines (Schroen *et al.*, 1994). As the development of active and autonomous learning skills is a primary goal of academic development (Giraud and Frielick, 1994 and Mahatey, Kagee and Naidoo, 1994), students' participation in other programmes could have contributed to higher scores for these scales.

Empowerment programme participants scored significantly higher on the helplessness scale, reflecting an ability to make use of resources necessary to success and seek help when needed, rather than responding to problems with passivity. Once again it is not possible to detect whether participants were less helpless before attending the programme (as they were motivated enough to seek help by attending the programme) or as a result of participation. This result should therefore be cautiously interpreted.

The same argument can be applied to the motivation sub-scale. Participants' higher scores were possibly the result of initially high motivation levels, which led them to join the programme. At the same time, however, it is possible that attendance of the programme increased their motivation, through the use of activities that are intrinsically reinforcing and enjoyable, such as interesting readings and exercises at the beginning of each class. According to the literature on intrinsic motivation, individuals who derive enjoyment from a task put

more effort into the task and hence do better than individuals who derive little enjoyment from a task (Bandura, 1997 and Deci, 1975). Evidence suggests an increase in intrinsic motivation among participants of the empowerment programme. Over 90% of the participants who completed the evaluation questionnaire agreed that their enjoyment of Psychology had increased as a result of attending the programme, while focus group respondents referred to a similar increase in motivation:

The empowerment work really helped. I was going to drop psychology, but now my marks have picked up. I feel it helped and motivated me to do more.

Participants also scored higher than non-participants on the assertiveness scale, which refers to confidence and an ability to approach lecturers or voice an opinion in a group. Many local studies have, however, found high levels of anxiety among black students when having to approach lecturers or speak in public (Barnsley, 1992 and Dammarell, 1988). As the empowerment programme provided many opportunities for discussion and sought to develop assertiveness, it is thought that assertiveness levels rose as a result of attendance. On the evaluation questionnaire three quarters of the respondents agreed that they were able to participate more actively in discussions and over 90% agreed that the programme had helped them become comfortable sharing their difficulties in a group. Two common themes in the focus groups were also the benefits derived from discussion, as well as students' increased sense of confidence as a result of participating in the programme. Once again, however, prior assertiveness levels cannot be ruled out as the cause of higher questionnaire scores.

Participants also scored significantly higher than non-participants on the scale measuring self esteem. The link between empowerment and self esteem has been established in other studies (Kieffer, 1984 and Maton and Salem, 1995). It is therefore hoped that higher self esteem levels in the current study were the result of participation in the programme. This is supported by findings from the focus groups where participants referred to greater confidence and control and an increase in self esteem. In the evaluation questionnaire almost 90% of respondents claimed that the empowerment focus had boosted their self esteem.

Power was the last sub-scale to show significant differences in terms of participation in the programme. It is similar to Bandura's (1997) concept of political efficacy, and refers specifically to students' beliefs about their ability to influence the future direction of the university, willingness to confront lecturers about issues such as racism or unfair marking, and commitment to suggesting improvements to course content. Here too, students' prior state of political efficacy was not determined although such issues were addressed in the programme, in a session on macro-level empowerment issues. Several respondents claimed that their political efficacy had increased as a result of attending the programme:

I now see myself as a student with a right to be here.

I find it [empowerment] useful elsewhere. In ... [other course] I couldn't see the value of the readings in the tuts, so I spoke to the lecturer and next year they're changing the system - so I helped the other students.

Significantly higher total questionnaire scores for students with higher academic performance than those of lower academic performance, makes intuitive sense. As empowerment has been related to experiences of mastery (Prilleltensky, 1991 and Rappaport, 1987), it is expected that individuals who are academically competent feel more in control and are, therefore, also more empowered than those who are less academically able.

Students with higher academic performance also scored higher on the control scale, reflecting a tendency to view outcomes as under one's control and due to the amount of effort expended (internal locus of control), rather than a tendency to view outcomes as unrelated to effort (external locus of control). This finding also makes intuitive sense as individuals who feel in control of their outcomes are more likely to expend effort on a task and hence more likely to succeed than those who feel that outcomes are beyond their control (Bandura, 1997).

Significant results were also found for the scale self esteem, with students of higher academic performance receiving higher scores on this scale than those of lower academic performance. This result is consistent with Van Overwalle's (1989) finding that academic self concept is the

second most important predictor of academic performance at tertiary level (0.37) after prior academic performance.

Finally significant results were found for academic performance on the time management and autonomous learning scales. As both strategies are designed to increase efficiency (Wong, 1994), it is to be expected that academically competent students are also efficient at managing their time and working independently. These results are also consistent with Van Overwalle's (1989) finding that regular studying is a key factor in predicting academic success.

The only interaction found, was a two way interaction between race and participation in the empowerment programme for the scale co-operation. Black students who attended the programme scored highest on this scale, reflecting familiarity with other students and a preference for co-operative, group-based studying, followed by white students who did not attend, then white students who did attend and finally black students who did not attend.

These results are difficult to explain. One would have expected black and white participants to have scored higher on this scale than non-participants, but would not have expected an interaction between race and participation in the empowerment programme. The pattern for black students is consistent with that of other studies which find that black students who attend academic development programmes such as this one, are more likely to participate in tutorial programmes in other disciplines (Schroen *et al.*, 1994) and also study in groups, resulting in higher scores on the co-operation scale. Black non-participants, on the other hand, are perhaps more passive and disempowered than their peers who have sought help, and thus have low co-operation scores as a result of the feelings of isolation and alienation discussed in chapter three. The reversal of the above pattern for white students, however, is confusing. Perhaps among white students large numbers of high achievers attend the empowerment programme as a way of further increasing their already high academic performance. These students may prefer the individualist, competitive styles of learning reinforced at school (Deutsch, 1993), and thus score lower on this scale than white non-participants. This explanation is, however, purely speculative as no evidence could be found to explain the interaction between race and participation in the programme.

No significant gender differences were found in this study, as predicted. This is consistent with other studies, such as DeBrabander and Boone's finding (1990 in Schultz and Schultz, 1994) of no gender difference in score on the Internal-External Scale of Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966). Despite earlier claims to the contrary (Veroff, Wilcox and Atkinson, 1953 in Schultz and Schultz, 1994), recent studies also suggest no gender differences in motivation to succeed (Jenkins, 1987 in Schultz and Schultz, 1994). Hansford and Hattie (1982) also found no gender differences in the relationship between self esteem and academic performance.

No racial differences in terms of overall levels of empowerment were found. This is contrary to what was expected as a number of other studies suggest that blacks and other power minorities are particularly disempowered groups (Gordon, 1985; Lazarus, 1985 and Sue, 1977 in Peterson et al., 1993). Evidence discussed in chapter three also suggests a pattern of powerlessness and alienation for black students especially on historically white campuses (Coleman, 1993; Lea, 1987; Zea et al., 1997 and Zweigenhaft and Cody, 1993). Evidence from this study, however, indicates that although major differences in overall score were found for participants in the empowerment programme (means of 290 for white and 282 for black participants) compared with non-participants (means of 240 for both black and white non-participants), no differences were noted for white students (mean of 254) compared with black students (258). This therefore suggests that the feelings of powerlessness and alienation discussed in chapter three may not be unique to black students, but affect white students as well. Students who take control of their studies by joining programmes such as this one, however, may experience similar feelings of empowerment, irrespective of race.

The above finding may also be the result of methodological factors. The nature of the sample was such that there were more black participants (47) than non-participants in the sample (36), while the reverse was true for white students (12 participants and 30 non-participants). Racial results were therefore weighted in the direction of empowerment programme participants, for black subjects, thus elevating the group mean, while results for white subjects were skewed in the direction of non-participants, thus lowering the group mean. Any differences in mean between black and white subjects may thus have been balanced out.

Significant differences according to race were found for the active learning, helplessness, power and time management scales, although not in the direction expected as black students scored significantly higher than white ones. Most South African studies, however, report reliance on rote learning, lack of critical thinking, and poor study habits among black students (Barnsley, 1992; Coleman, 1993 and Nyamapfene and Letsaka, 1995). The higher scores for black students may thus be the result of larger numbers of black empowerment programme participants. Another possible explanation is that black students are more frequently the participants in academic development initiatives, which focus on active learning, deep level comprehension of material and academic skills development, thus explaining their higher performance in these areas than white subjects (Bulman, 1996). Their higher scores on the power scale may also be the result of greater participation in student political structures than is true for white students (although this claim is speculative and based solely on observation).

Participation in extra-mural activities did not impact on subjects' total questionnaire score. This is contrary to existing literature which suggests that subjects who participate more in their community report higher levels of empowerment than those who participate little or not at all (Perkins *et al.*, 1990; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, and Chavis, 1990; Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988 and Zimmerman *et al.*, 1992). These studies, however, use comprehensive measures of participation including such aspects as the number of organisations belonged to, involvement in each and leadership positions held. The present study, however, merely asked subjects to list clubs or sports teams belonged to and positions of responsibility held, with results coded into three categories of participation. Lack of significance may, therefore, be the result of using such a crude measure of participation. (As the relationship between participation and empowerment was not one of the main aims of the study, I did not wish to extend an already lengthy questionnaire by including detailed measures of community participation.)

To summarise the results of the analyses of variance, participation in the empowerment programme had a significant impact on subjects' overall questionnaire score, as well as scores on seven of the ten sub-scales. It is impossible to state conclusively, however, that elevated scores were the result of participation in the programme, rather than prior empowerment levels, as no pre-intervention data was collected. While this may seem to be a flaw of the study it

should be noted that the motivation for developing the questionnaire was not to measure pre- and post-intervention levels of empowerment. Rather it was developed as a tentative attempt to design a reliable measure of empowerment in the academic context and explore some of the variables on which it depends as well as the relationship between aspects of the empowerment construct. This data combined with that of the evaluation questionnaire and focus group discussions to provide a very large data set. Adding pre- and post-intervention data would have been interesting but was considered beyond the limits of this thesis.

The claim that empowerment levels had increased as a result of participation in the programme was, however, supported by evidence from the programme evaluation. Findings suggest that participants considered themselves to have been in a state of disempowerment before attending the programme and attributed their current levels of assertiveness, motivation and responsibility for their studies to participation in the programme.

Significant findings on the total scale and four sub-scales were found for the variable academic ability. No significant gender findings were found, as predicted, but the variable race produced a confusing pattern of results. No overall racial differences were noted, but surprisingly black subjects performed higher than white ones on four sub-scales. This may, however, have been due to black students' greater participation in academic development programmes, increasing the likelihood of them using active learning techniques (Bulman, 1996). On the other hand, results may have been caused by larger numbers of black participants than non-participants in the sample, elevating the group mean for black subjects, while larger numbers of white non-participants than participants lowered the group mean for white subjects.

No relationship was found between overall empowerment score and participation in clubs or sports. The measure of participation included, however, may have been too crude to accurately quantify the relationship between empowerment and participation.

10.2.2.2. Relationship between aspects of the empowerment construct: correlational findings:

The above analyses of variance allowed for the exploration of the relationship between empowerment and five independent variables. To explore the relationship between some of the dependent measures included in the study, correlations and factor analysis were used. As empowerment is often defined as a network of interrelated components (Zimmerman, 1995), correlations were used to quantify the strength and direction of the relationship between some of these components. Correlations between the sub-scales and overall scale varied from 0.0 (no relationship) between time management and co-operation to a strong relationship of 0.8 between the total scale and helplessness. A mean correlation of 0.4 was found. These findings are similar to those of Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988), who found correlations of between 0.07 and 0.61, and a mean of 0.31, in their study of 11 indices of psychological empowerment. They concluded from the moderate size of the correlations that each index measured a unique component of empowerment and at the same time overlapped with the other components, suggesting they were all aspects of the same construct. The same conclusion can be drawn from the current study, and is supported by the correlations of equal to or greater than 0.5 between the overall questionnaire and every sub-scale apart from co-operation (0.26).

Highest correlations were found between the overall scale total and helplessness (0.8), motivation (0.75), assertiveness (0.74), and active learning (0.73) as well as between assertiveness and helplessness (0.76). Moderate correlations were also found between assertiveness and active learning (0.55), active learning and helplessness (0.59), active learning and motivation (0.65), and motivation and helplessness (0.59). It thus appears that a fairly strong relationship exists between helplessness, motivation, assertiveness and active learning as parts of an overall construct of academic empowerment.

These components closely match Zimmerman's (1995) construct of psychological empowerment, adapted to the tertiary academic context. As discussed in chapter five, section 5.2.4., Zimmerman (1995) includes three components in his definition of empowerment. Firstly, the intra-personal component includes perceptions of helplessness or one's ability to

exert control as well as the motivation to control. The helplessness scale in the present study suggests a personality style of either passivity or determination to exert control and act in the face of problems. Combined with motivation, these two scales can be thought of as the intra-psychic components of empowerment. Zimmerman's interactional component refers to an understanding of one's social environment and the resources within it, and an ability to access these resources through social interaction. Assertiveness refers to the confidence to approach lecturers when necessary or voice an opinion in a group and constitutes the interactional aspect of empowerment. Finally the behavioural component involves actions that demonstrate one's empowerment. The active learning scale refers to study behaviours characterised by deep level comprehension of material rather than surface understanding and therefore constitutes the behavioural component of academic empowerment. The close link between Zimmerman's construct of psychological empowerment and the above four sub-scales thus suggests that the current instrument is a valid measure of empowerment.

The relationship between locus of control and the above scales was low to moderate. Control correlated with active learning at 0.19, helplessness at 0.33, motivation at 0.29 and assertiveness at 0.20. A moderate correlation of 0.5 was also found between control and the overall scale (one of the lowest correlations between a sub-scale and the overall scale). The suggestion made in section 5.3. of chapter five that the aspect of control most closely linked to empowerment is not locus of control but rather learned helplessness is thus supported by these results and confirms the work of Sue and Zane (1980) and Zimmerman (1990b). It thus appears that a passive, helpless approach to studying is more closely related to student's academic empowerment, than the tendency towards an internal or external locus of control.

10.2.2.3.   Aspects of the empowerment construct, learning and academic performance: correlational findings:

In addition to expanding on the relationship between aspects of empowerment, correlations between the sub-scales also revealed information about aspects of learning. A fairly strong relationship of 0.65 was found between active learning and motivation, suggesting that students who are intrinsically interested in the course and motivated to succeed also adopt

active and deep learning techniques. This is consistent with the work of Biggs (1987) who suggests that deep learners are intrinsically motivated and enjoy their studies. Entwistle (1981 in Giraud and Frielick, 1994) also claims that enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation is more likely to lead to deep comprehension than rote memorisation. A link between motivation and deep level understanding of course material was also found in the focus group discussions:

I've found a great change. I now work much harder. Also when I read a book, I have a strategy, I know how to approach the book. I use the textbook like an encyclopaedia rather than learning every fact in the book.

Moderate correlations were also found between active learning and self esteem (0.40), self esteem and motivation (0.43), and active learning and motivation (0.65), suggesting a relationship between these three constructs. Individuals with high self esteem are thus likely to also be intrinsically motivated, and make use of active learning techniques. This parallels Abouserie's (1995) finding, discussed in chapter six, section 6.2.4., of a positive link between self esteem, motivation and deep learning. While individuals with low self esteem relied on rote learning and showed low motivation levels, those with high self esteem used deep, active learning patterns and were also more motivated to achieve.

In chapter six, section 6.2.4 the relationship was discussed between several of the constructs included in the questionnaire and academic performance. To explore whether similar findings existed in the present study, sub-scale scores were correlated with subjects' class of pass in Psychology 110. A small, positive relationship of 0.13 was found between academic performance and motivation, suggesting that, to a small extent, students who are more motivated are more likely to achieve in Psychology than those who are less motivated. This relationship is weaker than that found by Uguruglu and Walberg (0.31) (1979, in Van Overwalle, 1989) and may be due to the South African policy of widened access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). Although these students often perform below the level of their peers, particularly in their first year of study, there is no evidence to suggest that they are less motivated to succeed, resulting in a weak relationship between motivation and academic performance.

A very small correlation (0.13) was also found between academic performance and helplessness. Although smaller than expected, this is consistent with Peterson and Barrett's (1987 in Peterson *et al.*, 1993) claim that a positive relationship exists between academic performance and helplessness. Hence students who attribute failures to internal, global and stable factors (such as lack of ability), and adopt a passive, defeatist approach to their studies are likely to do worse than those who attribute failures to external, specific and temporary factors (such as having a migraine on the day of the examination).

A slightly stronger relationship was found between academic performance and locus of control (0.25), suggesting that students who feel more in control perform better than those who consider their actions to be beyond their control. This correlation is somewhat stronger than the relationship of 0.18 found by Findley and Cooper (1983) in their meta-analysis of 275 studies. This dropped to 0.14, however, when university students were the population studied, leading to the conclusion that locus of control has become a stable personality factor by late adolescence. This view is confirmed by Watkins (1987) who found no relation between locus of control and academic performance at tertiary level. The current finding of a positive relation between the two, however, makes sense if linked to Bandura's (1997) finding of a relationship between locus of control, motivation and performance. Hence students who feel in control expend more effort on a task and are more likely to achieve success, while those who do not feel in control of their studies are less motivated to work hard and so less likely to succeed.

A small, positive relationship of 0.10 was found between time management and academic performance and parallels that of 0.24 between regular studying and academic performance found by Van Overwalle (1989). A weak relationship of 0.08 was found between active learning and academic performance. This may be because, despite overt commitment to developing deep learners, many university courses, particularly at first year level, require only rote memorisation to succeed (Giraud and Frielick, 1994). Van Overwalle (1989) also found no relationship between use of deep or surface learning styles and academic performance, arguing that a student's perception of the efficacy of his/her study methods is a more important predictor of academic performance than the method itself.

A weak relationship of 0.08 was also found between co-operation and academic performance. This is weaker than that of 0.22 between academic performance and seeking and receiving help found by Van Overwalle (1989). The current lack of relationship may be because the learning environment in most educational institutions tends to be one of competitive, individualist rather than co-operative learning (Deutsch, 1993). Hence for many students, peer study groups are not seen as effective methods to achieve success. Co-operation and social interaction may also have a complex, indirect influence on academic performance (Jay and D'Augelli, 1991). Low social interaction may, for example, impact on loneliness which, in turn, lowers motivation and thus indirectly lowers academic performance.

The relationship between self esteem and academic performance was also a weak one (0.06), slightly lower than that found by Hansford and Hattie (1982) in their meta-analysis of 128 studies. They found vastly differing correlations ranging from -0.77 to 0.96 with a mean of 0.21 overall and 0.14 when subjects were university students. The relationship found in the current study is also lower than the correlation of 0.37 found by Van Overwalle (1989). The weak relationship in the current study may be seen as support for Lobhan's (1975 in Howcroft, 1990) finding, discussed in chapter three (section 3.4.2) that black South African students are less likely to attribute academic failures to internal factors than their American counterparts, as a way of protecting their self esteem. They therefore exhibit what is referred to as a defensive external locus of control, attributing success to internal factors and hence behaving as individuals with an internal locus of control, but responding as individuals with an external locus of control with respect to failures (Schultz and Schultz, 1994). Hence black students who performed poorly in Psychology 110 may not necessarily have a lower self esteem than students who did well, thus weakening the relationship between these two factors.

10.2.2.4. Identification of the factors of academic empowerment: factor analysis:

Correlations revealed the nature of the relationship between pairs of scales chosen *a priori* as appropriate measures of academic empowerment. Factor analysis, however, showed the relationships among all 75 questionnaire items, *a posteriori*, by identifying underlying factors from within the data set that account for observed relationships between items.

Four factors were identified, accounting for a total of 27% of the variance. While this seems low, distinct themes were evident in the four factors. After four factors, however, eigenvalues became so low and close together that to extract further factors would have added little extra information. Accounting for 27% of the variance is also consistent with the findings of other factor analytic studies. Short and Rinehart (1992), for example, accounted for 34% of the total variance in their identification of six factors of teacher empowerment.

The four factors identified in the current study show little relation to the three factors identified on Short and Rinehart's (1992) School Participant Empowerment Scale or the six factors on Wilson's (1993) Self Empowerment Index. This should not be seen as a flaw of the current measure, however, but is consistent with Rappaport's (1984b) claim that empowerment is a multi-level construct that must be operationalised within the specific context studied. Both the Self Empowerment Index and the School Participant Empowerment Scale are measures of teachers' sense of autonomy and empowerment and thus it is to be expected that students' academic empowerment consists of different factors.

The factors identified in the current study are however similar to Zimmerman's construct of psychological empowerment (1990a and 1995), adapted to the academic context. The factors named locus of control and extrinsic direction correspond to Zimmerman's intra-personal aspect of psychological empowerment, which includes cognitive, personality and motivational components. The social ability factor refers to the confidence to voice opinions, assertiveness when approaching staff, and a preference for co-operative forms of learning. It therefore constitutes Zimmerman's interactional component. Finally factor one contrasts behaviours that reflect an active approach to learning, with study behaviours that are defeatist, passive and helpless and thus constitutes the behavioural component of psychological empowerment.

The moderate correlations between the helplessness, motivation, assertiveness and active learning scales and the themes of the above factors thus suggest that this study shows greatest affinity with Zimmerman's approach to empowerment (1990a and 1995). This is to be expected considering that the intervention targeted individual students, rather than impacting directly on the institutional system, as in the work of Speer and Hughey (1995) or Rich et al. (1995).

10.2.2.5. Causal influences on the four factors of empowerment:

The final analysis performed on the data were analyses of variance, using race, class of pass in Psychology 110 and participation in the empowerment programme as independent variables and scores for factors one to four as the dependent measures. Significant main effects for race and participation were found for the active learning factor. Black students were more likely to make use of active learning techniques than white students, as were programme participants than non-participants. The same pattern of results was found for the original active learning scale. A significant main effect for race was also found for the extrinsic direction scale. Here, white students were more likely to be self directed, setting their own study goals, while black students were more extrinsically motivated to please their family and others. These results may be related to the greater emphasis placed on co-operation and community in traditional African cultures as opposed to the individualist values of Western cultures (Matsumoto, 1994). They may also be due to the disadvantaged education and reliance on rote learning in black schools which provide fewer opportunities for pupils to develop enjoyment of their studies than those experienced by white pupils (Nyamapfene and Letsaka, 1995).

Results also suggested that students with higher academic performance in Psychology 110 were significantly more likely to report an internal locus of control and were more intrinsically motivated and self directed, than those of lower academic performance. The former finding parallels that of the original locus of control scale, while the latter finding makes intuitive sense. According to Bandura (1997), students who are intrinsically motivated put more effort into a task and are so more likely to succeed than those governed by extrinsic reinforcement.

10.2.2.6. Empowerment questionnaire: summary of findings:

With a reliability of 0.87, the empowerment questionnaire can be considered a reliable measure of academic empowerment. A close relationship was also demonstrated between four of the original scales, and the four factors identified, and Zimmerman's (1995) components of psychological empowerment, suggesting that the scale is also a valid measure of empowerment.

The causal relationship between empowerment and several independent variables was explored. Participation in the empowerment programme had a strong impact on results, with significant main effects found for the overall questionnaire as well as seven sub-scales. The lack of pre-testing made it difficult to conclude that participation was responsible for the higher questionnaire scores of the empowerment programme participants, although supportive evidence from the programme evaluation would suggest that this is the case.

Main effects for the overall questionnaire and four of the sub-scales were found for the variable pass and main effects for four sub-scales were found for race. These were, however, in the opposite direction to the one predicted, with black students scoring higher than white ones. No gender effects or effects due to participation in extra-mural activities were found.

Correlations explored the strength and direction of the relationship between the sub-scales. All correlations were positive, with a mean of 0.4, suggesting that they measured both overlapping and unique aspects of empowerment. The strongest relations were found between active learning, motivation, helplessness and assertiveness, and the total questionnaire. These scales were related to Zimmerman's (1995) components of psychological empowerment.

Moderate correlations were also found between the active learning, motivation and self esteem scales. These findings were related to Biggs' (1987) deep and surface learning styles, with a tendency for those with high self esteem to be more likely to use deep learning patterns than those of low self esteem. The ten sub-scales were also correlated with subjects' class of pass in Psychology 110. Small but positive relations were found between academic performance and motivation, locus of control, helplessness and time management, but very little relation was found between performance and self esteem, active learning and co-operation.

Finally, factor analysis allowed me to determine whether the ten sub-scales were the most appropriate components of academic empowerment, or whether other factors could be identified within the data. Results revealed four factors which overlapped considerably with Zimmerman's (1995) components of psychological empowerment, once again suggesting that the scale is a valid measure of empowerment, adapted to the academic context.

10.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY TO THE FIELD OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Chapter two outlined some of the disadvantages experienced by black students in this country, resulting in unacceptably high failure and dropout rates, particularly at first year level, low graduation rates and poor entry into post-graduate study. Chapter four discussed attempts by universities to redress this imbalance, through the efforts of academic development.

As discussed in chapter four the strategies initially adopted were aimed almost exclusively at student development, in the form of tutorial help and academic skills courses, supplementary to lecture programmes. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, critics of academic support began to argue that labour-intensive student development programmes were not cost-effective in meeting the huge demand for assistance (Agar, 1992 and Moulder, 1991). By the mid 1990s, therefore, academic development practitioners began to advocate a shift away from a deficit approach to one of transformation in all aspects of teaching and learning, through the mainstreaming of academic development concerns into the regular curriculum (Bulman, 1996).

Academic development practitioners have not completely abandoned efforts at student development. Four examples reflecting the variety of attempts at student development were discussed in chapter four, section 4.3. namely academic skills and literacy courses, departmental tutorial programmes, Supplemental Instruction and the Science Foundation Programme at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Four important criticisms can be levelled against most student development initiatives, as discussed in chapter four, section 4.4.

Firstly, most academic development initiatives adopt a reductionist approach to student development. They focus almost exclusively on cognitive, meta-cognitive and linguistic concerns and ignore students' feelings of alienation, anxiety and powerlessness. At the level of academic debate academic development practitioners are aware of the effects of psycho-social factors like confidence, low self esteem or financial pressures on academic performance (Agar, 1990; Coleman, 1993 and Lea, 1987). They assume, however, that these concerns are indirectly addressed through the co-operative learning tutorial format (Agar, 1987b).

Secondly, few academic development interventions directly address the power imbalances between black and white students as well as students and lecturers. It is assumed that the tutorial format is sufficient to overcome students' anxieties and lack of confidence without any training in participation. Unless properly managed by adequately trained tutors, however, tutorial programmes are at risk for becoming a minefield of political tensions between passive black students and white students who dominate discussions (Damarell,1988 and Tisani,1988). In interactions with lecturers black students' sense of powerlessness is equally apparent, with students often too anxious to approach staff for assistance (Barnsley, 1992 and Lea, 1987).

Thirdly current initiatives can be criticised as a result of students' difficulties in transferring the academic skills developed to their mainstream disciplines, or between disciplines. Evidence suggests that students usually view academic skills either as peripheral and unimportant (Agar, 1990) or as a body of facts to be rote learnt and then forgotten (Blunt, 1992 and Wood,1998).

Probably the most important criticism of student development is the lack of rigorous evaluation (Agar, 1988; Mhlane, 1991 and Muhlopo, 1992). As discussed in chapters four (section 4.4) and seven (section 7.3.1), the emphasis on service rather than research in academic development as well as the lack of agreed upon criteria for success (Agar, 1988) results in few attempts to evaluate the outcome of these programmes. The few attempts at quantitative evaluation have generally failed to find significantly higher performance by participants than by non-participants (Agar, 1988). Attempts at qualitative evaluation have also often been reduced to a few comments from a small sample of participants (Muhlopo, 1992), suffering from various forms of data bias (Cowen and Gesten, 1980).

The present study thus attempted to extend the field of academic development by addressing these four criticisms. Firstly a holistic approach to student development was adopted, focussing not only on cognitive difficulties, but on the interaction between multiple factors impacting on academic success. In so doing, the programme brought together the best elements of existing initiatives discussed in chapter four. Hence the Science Foundation Programme's emphasis on the psycho-social aspects of student development was combined with student responsibility for learning and the discipline-specific nature of Supplemental

Instruction, as well as the emphasis on academic skills development of academic development tutorial programmes, thus integrating academic skills, course content and empowerment.

Like the Science Foundation Programme (Grayson, 1994), this programme directly workshopped relevant psycho-social concerns rather than assuming that these would be addressed through a tutorial format. By comparing the performance of programme participants with those who had participated in a course revision programme, the effects due to the psycho-social focus on empowerment could also be quantified.

The programme did not limit its focus to psycho-social concerns, however, but addressed a range of issues, from narrow cognitive to broad interpersonal and campus-wide concerns. Hughes' (1987) analysis of the range of difficulties experienced by black students, provides a useful framework for the multiple levels of difficulty the programme targeted.

At the level of cognitive concerns, academic skills such as goal setting and summarising techniques were discussed from within the context of the discipline. Results from the empowerment questionnaire also show a pattern of significantly higher motivation levels and active and autonomous learning styles for programme participants suggesting that cognitive concerns had been met. In the evaluation questionnaire, 92% of respondents also claimed they had developed the academic skills needed to succeed in Psychology, by attending.

At the level of psycho-social concerns the programme sought to overcome feelings of powerlessness by providing students with many opportunities for revision and mastery of course content, and by experientially exploring psycho-social skills such as assertiveness and time management. In the programme evaluation students reported a higher sense of confidence and control as a result of attending the programme, while in the empowerment questionnaire participants were measured to be significantly less helpless than their peers and reported a higher self esteem, suggesting that some psycho-social concerns had been met.

The programme also met students' interpersonal needs, providing opportunities for small and large group discussion, roleplay and activities to encourage friendship formation in a non-

threatening environment. Most participants agreed in the evaluation that they had become more comfortable in group situations as a result of attending. The empowerment questionnaire also revealed higher levels of assertiveness among participants than non-participants.

Finally the programme sought to address Hughes' (1987) broadest two levels, namely campus ecological and socio-political concerns. In the first session, an outline was developed of the academic resources available to students at the level of the department, faculty and university. A session was also spent debating macro-level factors impacting on empowerment, including the Psychology department, the university, the tertiary education system, and broader social, political, economic and cultural systems. Results from the empowerment questionnaire suggest that participants scored significantly higher on the power scale, indicating stronger beliefs about their ability to influence the direction of the university and participate in the process of transformation. Results from the evaluation also suggest that the programme impacted on wider levels than individual students' academic performance in Psychology. Three quarters of participants considered the focus on empowerment beneficial to their other courses. Two thirds considered it helpful in terms of their participation in university life. Participants in the focus groups also claimed that they had developed personally as well as academically, giving them the confidence to address concerns both in and outside the Psychology department.

Secondly, the empowerment programme sought to address the power imbalances often overlooked by academic development practitioners. This was achieved by encouraging students to collaborate in determining the direction of the programme and by providing opportunities for them to develop a sense of mastery over their studies. In addition, the tutor confined herself to a facilitative rather than an expert role:

Jacqui is very motivating. She never says our answers are wrong. That is very painful when people say that, it makes us feel stupid. She says we're on the right track, even if the answer is not right, so we're encouraged to try again.

Jacqui works at our level. She asks questions back to us rather than telling us the answers, so the students guide the process. She gives us a chance to discuss the issues.

By overcoming feelings of powerlessness and boosting students confidence the programme thus sought to impact at a wider level than the Psychology 120 course. Evidence revealed that several students felt empowered enough to address course concerns in other disciplines and deal with problems in residence, suggesting that the programme had indeed empowered students to participate in wider processes of change.

The programme also overcame the concern regarding the failure to transfer skills learnt in academic development to mainstream disciplines, by discussing all academic skills within the context of current lecture content. Evidence indicates that students did not limit skills learnt to the discipline of Psychology but transferred them to their other disciplines:

> *It [the programme] helped all my courses - e.g. I use the spider diagrams in all my courses.*

Perhaps the greatest contribution made by this study to the field of academic development is the use of rigorous, multifaceted forms of evaluation. It is one of few academic development studies to systematically evaluate an educational intervention, using multiple qualitative and quantitative methods, as advocated by Agar (1988). A quantitative, quasi-experimental method was thus used to evaluate the impact of the programme on academic performance. The comparison with a matched control group and a group who attended a course revision programme allowed me to isolate the effect on performance of the empowerment component of the programme, as opposed to the effect due to the use of small group, tutorial-based teaching. Results indicated that both tutorial groups performed better than the control group, but that participants in the empowerment programme performed best of all, suggesting an additional effect, specifically as a result of the empowerment focus. Instead of relying on a single measure of improvement, performance was also assessed descriptively, in terms of mean final marks and pass rates, and inferentially, using analysis of variance and trend analysis. This allowed for a fuller picture of the impact of the variables under investigation.

Students' attitudes and opinions were qualitatively assessed, also using multiple methods. Rating scales provided broad coverage of opinions about various aspects of the programme,

while open-ended questions and focus group discussions provided greater detail concerning specific aspects. Results of the empowerment questionnaire also gave additional information to suggest an increase in empowerment among participants. In future, this questionnaire could offer a useful measure of pre- and post-intervention levels of empowerment among students.

The evaluation of this intervention is also consistent with Mhlane's recommendations (1991) for a national model of academic development evaluation. Like Agar (1988) he proposes a holistic model, with both qualitative and quantitative components. To persuade academics of the benefits of academic development he particularly advocates the evaluation of the impact of an intervention on academic performance. The present study clearly illustrates the benefits of small group tutorial teaching on academic performance and also the specific benefit of the empowerment focus of the programme. Mhlane also advocates the use of ongoing evaluation, to determine the impact of an intervention over time, as achieved by the trend analysis in this study. Finally he recommends the collaboration of students in the design of the evaluation. In this programme, students were trained in methods of evaluation and then collaborated in determining the aspects to be evaluated as well as writing some of the evaluation questions.

10.4. RELATION OF PRESENT FINDINGS TO EMPOWERMENT THEORY AND PRACTICE:

The main aim of this study was to design, implement and evaluate a programme of student development consistent with the principles and practices of empowerment theory. The following discussion will therefore reflect critically on this study and its relation to particular aspects of empowerment theory and practice.

Firstly, based on social ecology theory's principle of adaptation (Trickett *et al.*, 1972 in Rappaport, 1977) empowerment theory advocates operationalising empowerment in terms of the context in which it is studied, and tailoring solutions to the unique needs of the community rather than imposing universal, monolithic solutions. The empowerment programme sought to meet this requirement by conducting an initial needs assessment to identify participants' unique needs and by adopting a dynamic structure that could be adapted

to suit these as they changed. Over 90% of participants agreed in the evaluation that the programme was run in a democratic manner and adapted to suit their needs. The flexibility of this programme was also compared with other academic development programmes, which students considered somewhat rigid, with a structure and format pre-determined by the tutor.

Secondly, empowerment theory conceives of an intervention systemically, as consisting of multiple interdependent levels, with an intervention at one level influencing all others (Rappaport, 1981). Although the empowerment programme targeted individual students, it should be viewed within the context of simultaneous transformation at wider levels of the university system. Wider forms of influence were also apparent within the programme. Students described in the evaluation how they had become empowered to handle a range of problems, including interpersonal issues or concerns in other disciplines. Three quarters of respondents also claimed that the programme had positively influenced their performance in other courses and two thirds stated that it had affected their participation in wider university activities. Results of the empowerment questionnaire also indicate that the programme impacted on multiple levels. Participants scored significantly higher than non-participants in terms of cognitive states (helplessness and motivation), interaction with others (assertiveness), political beliefs (power) and study behaviours (active and autonomous learning scales).

A central goal of empowerment interventions is the promotion of health and well-being, through the nurturing of naturally occurring competencies and their transfer to the current context (Heller *et al.*, 1984). This boosts self esteem, as emphasis is placed on existing strengths rather than areas of deficit. In the empowerment programme terms like 'deficit' and 'disadvantage' were therefore rejected in favour of an approach which valued the richness of cultural differences. In the initial needs assessment students spent time identifying existing strengths which they felt could help them succeed academically. They were also encouraged to consider themselves as discipline experts rather than relying on the expertise of the tutor:

> *In my other courses tuts are formal. The tutor is the expert and you take from them rather than sharing ideas with the group. Here the more you talk the more you gain. Here I feel an expert, I know what I'm talking about.*

Evidence suggests that the programme was successful in promoting competencies. Students described a boost in confidence and self esteem and almost 90% agreed that they had become more aware of their strengths by attending the programme.

A fourth feature of empowerment theory is that all interactions between expert and community should be characterised by collaboration. Community members are more likely to become empowered if they participate in decision making than if they have a solution imposed upon them (Kieffer, 1984). In this programme students collaborated in the development of programme aims, the design of content and the programme's evaluation. Students and tutor also signed a contract of what each party could expect from the other, emphasising their mutual dependence on one another for the success of the programme.

Results suggest that the collaborative style of interaction was achieved in the programme. Three quarters of respondents agreed that they had been involved in determining the programme's aims, and over 90% agreed that classes were run in a democratic manner and adapted to suit their specific needs. Respondents also considered the student-centred, participative nature of the programme essential to its success.

Finally, empowerment theory advocates a facilitative leadership role with the expert acting as mentor and friend, providing emotional support as well as skills' development (Kieffer, 1984 and Swift, 1984). Students valued the fact that they were encouraged to discover answers for themselves rather than relying on the tutor to re-teach the course and claimed that this increased their sense of mastery and control. At the same time, they recognised a limit to their empowerment. They mentioned the tension between wanting to revise the lecture course, but which would allow them to remain passive and dependent on the tutor, and at the same time recognising the value of empowerment to their long term academic development.

As well as meeting the above requirements for empowerment interventions, this study was also consistent with the aims of community research, namely to increase understanding of community problems and bring about community-based change (Kelly, 1986). By developing a programme to improve academic performance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds,

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the study is an example of research as social action aiming to effect change within a previously disempowered group. The programme also met the specific objectives of community research, articulated by Heller *et al*. (1984). It began by assessing community needs, then sought to design and implement an appropriate intervention to satisfy these needs. At every session, the group reflected on whether these needs were being met by the current content and where necessary the programme was revised. The intervention was then subject to rigorous evaluation in which students collaborated. Finally, useful products were supplied, in the form of a model of an empowering education that could be applied in other academic contexts.

Evidence from the empowerment questionnaire indicates that the current study was also consistent with several of the models discussed in chapter five, which differ according to the organisational level targeted. While Speer and Hughey (1995) and Rich *et al*. (1995) offer models aimed at the organisation-wide level of analysis, Couto (1989) targets a community level of analysis and Zimmerman (1995) and Kieffer (1984) focus on individual forms of empowerment. By empowering black students who constitute the most powerless group of stakeholders within the university (Gray, 1984) to overcome their feelings of alienation, the current study targets an individual level of analysis and is therefore most closely allied to those models which target individuals. The choice of an individual level of intervention and the associated individual models of empowerment should not be viewed as a dismissal of broader processes of empowerment. As discussed in chapter six (section 6.2.5.) the current study is conceptualised as an essential first step, empowering students and developing the necessary skills, so that they can make an informed contribution to wider change processes.

As discussed in chapter four, Kieffer (1984) views empowerment as a developmental process whereby the individual grows from helpless, powerless victim, to confident, competent adult. Although the thirteen week-long programme used in the current study is hardly comparable to the slow process of growth referred to by Kieffer, similar themes of growth and development are referred to in the focus group discussions of the current study.

Kieffer's initial stage is the era of entry, when individuals experience a traumatic incident that provokes a sense of outrage and motivates them to begin a process of empowerment. In the

empowerment programme, such experiences were often due to failure on a test, leading to feelings of despondency, which then motivated students to join the programme:

Before, if I failed a test or exercise, it felt as if my world has caved in.

In the second stage, the era of advancement, supportive intra-group relations and nurturing by an expert who acts as friend and mentor initiate a process of development. The benefits of participating in a group and being mentored by a tutor were evident in the current study:

You also get to know others. Some of us have formed our own study group as a result of coming to EDP.

Jacqui is very patient and works through everything at our pace.

In the era of incorporation, participants gain self confidence and mastery, and develop a mature self concept. A common theme in the focus group discussions was the boost to self confidence and self esteem as a result of participation in the programme:

I feel more comfortable in the university environment now - I feel confident that I am important and I have a right to be here.

I gained confidence by coming. I gained more control over my work. I felt that I'd done everything I could to do well.

Finally, Kieffer claims that participants enter the era of commitment when the fully empowered individual is able to apply his/her new sense of empowerment in other contexts. Several comments in the focus group discussions suggested that participants were able to transfer what they had learnt to other subjects and their personal life as well:

It helped not only psychology, but my other courses too. I now feel a sense of empowerment about my work.

In the first semester I had a problem of noise in the res, but now I can politely ask people to turn their music down.

Although a similar growth from disempowerment to mature, empowered behaviour is referred to in both Kieffer's work and the current study, the model of empowerment that this study is most closely allied to, is Zimmerman's (1990a and 1995) model of psychological empowerment. As discussed above, he considers psychological empowerment to consist of a complex network of components, broad enough to apply in any context, but also adapted to the specific context under study. In the current study, empowerment is thus thought of, not as a unitary variable, but a network of ten interrelated components. The moderate to high correlation between these components and the overall questionnaire score indicates that all sub-scales measure both unique and overlapping aspects of the construct empowerment.

Zimmerman divides psychological empowerment into an intra-personal, a social interactional and a behavioural element. The ten sub-scales in the current study can be divided according to these three components. The motivation, helplessness, control and self esteem scales parallel Zimmerman's intra-personal component, while the scales of co-operation, assertiveness and power parallel the interactional aspect of psychological empowerment. Finally the active and autonomous learning and time management scales can be thought of as empowered behaviours within an academic context. When the empowerment questionnaire was subject to factor analysis, the resultant factors also showed close similarity to the above three components. The factors of locus of control and an extrinsic motivational style are similar to Zimmerman's intra-psychic component, the social ability factor is equivalent to his interactional component and the active learning factor parallels his reference to empowered behaviours.

One area where current findings do not support those of Zimmerman is the relation between psychological empowerment and community participation. While Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) and Zimmerman *et al.* (1992) found clear evidence of a relationship between the two, no such relationship was found in the current study. This may, however, be due to the use of different forms of measurement, namely correlation in Zimmerman's studies, while the current study used analysis of variance, which failed to find evidence of a causal link between

participation and empowerment. The measure of participation used in the present study was also far less sophisticated than those used by Zimmerman and his colleagues, which may also account for the current failure to find a relationship between the two variables.

10.5. ELEMENTS OF AN EMPOWERING EDUCATION:

Based on qualitative and quantitative results, observations in the empowerment programme and discussions with participants, and the literature reviewed for this thesis, a set of elements for an empowering education are proposed. These should not be considered a fixed, universal model of academic empowerment, but rather a set of guidelines which can be adapted to the particular context under study.

10.5.1. Definitional issues:

10.5.1.1.   Operationalise empowerment within the specific context studied:

The first element of an empowering education highlights the paradoxical nature of empowerment (Rappaport, 1981). While a set of guidelines implies application to a variety of settings, empowerment theorists reject universal, generalised solutions to community problems (Rappaport, 1981 and Zimmerman, 1995). Hence the first step in an empowering education is to develop an understanding of empowerment based on the broad principles of empowerment theory but also specific to the context being studied.

The evidence of a link between Zimmerman's model of psychological empowerment and the findings of the current study was therefore used as the basis for developing the following definition of empowerment specific to the tertiary educational context in this country:

Academic empowerment refers to the application of psychological empowerment to study-related cognitions and behaviours. It consists of three components. Firstly it involves an intra-psychic component, referring to feelings of control over one's studies, a sense of self direction, responsibility for studying and intrinsic motivation

and enjoyment of one's studies. Secondly it includes interpersonal factors, such as an ability to discuss and debate the discipline in group settings and the assertiveness to approach lecturers. This component also refers to an understanding of the socio-political environment, and especially a belief in the efficacy of students' participation in, as well as a willingness to contribute to, wider processes of transformation within the university context. Finally academic empowerment includes empowered study behaviours, especially deep level comprehension of material, effective management of one's studies and an ability to set and achieve realistic study goals. The effects of academic empowerment are not limited to a single discipline but impact on one's personal life and performance in all disciplines. Participants also develop the skills needed to make meaningful contribution to wider processes of transformation.

10.5.1.2.   Conduct a thorough needs assessment and clarify mutual expectations at the beginning of the process:

An empowerment process should begin with a thorough assessment of students' academic needs. Emphasis should be placed, not only on identifying deficits, but also on existing areas of strength which may benefit academic performance. The needs assessment should explore those needs unique to each student as well as needs common to the group as a whole. This is achieved by beginning with individual needs identification, followed by small group discussion of similarities between individuals' needs and finally plenary discussion, during which the needs of the group as a whole are explored and prioritised.

Once needs have been identified, programme aims should be articulated and course content designed, through a process of negotiation between tutor and students. After group discussion the tutor should be mandated to write course aims and develop an outline of course content, presenting these back to the group at the following session for refinement and ratification.

Mutual expectations should also be articulated at the start of the programme, to prevent later disillusionment if expectations are not met. Expectations can be summarised in a contract signed by all participants, which may increase commitment to participating in the programme.

10.5.2. Roles of participants:

10.5.2.1.   Encourage collaboration between tutor and students:

Interactions between tutor and students should be characterised by collaboration at all stages including programme design and selection of course material, facilitation of small group discussion and evaluation. This will neutralise unequal power relations and encourage students to take ownership of the programme. Other useful strategies include frequent use of small group discussion followed by plenary report back and the Jigsaw technique (Aronson *et al.*, 1978). When course material is revised, students could also be asked to write down a question or area of concern, used as a ticket to gain entry into the session. Questions could then be grouped into similar concerns and used as the basis for group discussion, thus preventing students from slipping into a state of passivity and expecting re-teaching.

10.5.2.2.   Adopt a facilitative tutor role:

The role of the tutor in an empowering educational process should be limited to that of facilitator, mentor and ally rather than lecturer and expert. Students should be encouraged to find solutions to concerns from within their group rather than expecting the tutor to re-teach difficult course content, and every opportunity should be used for group discussion, workshop and experiential forms of teaching, rather than didactic lecturing. Techniques like the Jigsaw technique (Aronson *et al.*, 1978) also emphasise student rather than tutor expertise.

10.5.3. Teaching methods and style:

10.5.3.1.   Boost existing competencies:

The needs assessment should not only identify areas of deficit, but also articulate individual and group strengths which will boost academic performance. Terms like 'disadvantage', 'deficit' and 'underprepared' should be rejected in favour of an approach emphasising the richness of cultural differences and the value of existing strengths. Regular course revision

exercises, frequent assessment and opportunities for self assessment should be used to allow students to gain a sense of mastery of the discipline. Encouraging student responsible for their own solutions also boosts their confidence and sense of expertise.

10.5.3.2. Adopt an active, experiential teaching style:

Due to the link between intrinsic enjoyment and improved academic performance (Bandura, 1997), many opportunities should be provided for students to develop enjoyment of the discipline. This can be done by using topical, interesting readings, relevant to the local context or to students' own experiences as well as through the use of creative group activities, from which students derive a sense of enjoyment. Experiential forms of learning and multimedia, such as videos, roleplay, practical tasks and research activities should also be used.

10.5.3.3. Provide many opportunities for group discussion:

To encourage collaboration, many opportunities should be provided for discussion. Large groups can be sub-divided into small ones, with plenary session report back. Each group could also be given responsibility for different aspects of the material to allow more to be covered. Students should be encouraged to join different groups at every session to increase familiarity among participants. Ice-breakers, nametags and fun introductory tasks can also be used to encourage friendships. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981) this will assist in breaking down traditional group boundaries and facilitate the development of a group identity.

10.5.3.4. Integrate academic skills, course content and self development:

An empowerment programme should adopt a holistic approach to student development, bringing together the teaching of academic skills with the revision of course content and providing opportunities for increased confidence, control and self esteem, thus addressing psycho-social needs as well. Many opportunities should, therefore, be provided for course revision, both in class, and through self and peer study exercises. Academic skills should also be workshopped within the context of discipline-specific material. Self development should

also be encouraged, both by providing opportunities for students to experience a sense of control and also by providing mentoring, counselling and emotional support, when needed.

10.5.4. <u>Practical concerns:</u>

10.5.4.1.   Provide sufficient time for development:

As discussed earlier, this programme highlights the tension between the long process of growth required for empowerment (Kieffer, 1984) and the relatively short time available for student development. If a programme such as this is voluntary, it is fairly difficult to encourage students to devote more than an hour or so a week to attending classes, due to commitments to their mainstream disciplines. It is therefore important that time be used efficiently to allow for maximum benefit, through such strategies as exercises for self study, allocating different tasks to groups, or encouraging students to meet in peer study groups. It must also be acknowledged that whereas a programme of educational empowerment may lay the foundation, much growth may occur after the programme has been concluded.

10.5.4.2.   Choose an appropriate venue for classes:

Attention should be paid to selecting a venue conducive for discussion. Traditional lecture theatres emphasise power differences between tutor (who stands at the front of the class) and students (seated in desks) and so should be avoided. The most appropriate arrangement is a semi-circle of tables in a large room, with chairs that can be re-arranged as needed and sufficient space for roleplay and discussion. The venue should also offer such facilities as overhead projection, video screening and a chalkboard.

10.5.5. <u>Evaluation:</u>

Finally any intervention should be thoroughly evaluated, both in terms of the impact on academic performance and in terms of students' attitudes and opinions. Students should participate in the evaluation process, selecting areas to be evaluated, writing questions, and,

where possible, helping in the gathering of data. An action research approach to evaluation should also be adopted (Winter, 1987). Opportunities should thus be structured into the programme for students to reflect on and change the direction of the programme in relation to their identified needs, rather than restricting evaluation to the end of the programme.

The above principles form a set of guidelines for an education that empowers students to take responsibility for their learning. Evidence from the current study as well as others (Cummins, 1986; Fasheh, 1990; and "Participatory Learning", 1995) indicates multiple cognitive, motivational, emotional and social benefits of such an education. These include increased mastery of course content and control of one's studies, greater enjoyment of the discipline and motivation to succeed, raised self esteem, increased assertiveness and the confidence to participate in group discussions. In addition there is evidence of a quantifiable, positive impact on academic performance. The comparison of the performance of participants in the empowerment programme with those in a course revision programme provides clear evidence to support this thesis's contention that such benefits are not the indirect result of small group, tutorial-based teaching methods, but are the direct outcome of a focus on academic empowerment.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSION

11.1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

This study aimed to address a perceived gap in the field of academic development, and particularly its application to student development. As discussed in the first three chapters, black students face many challenges adjusting to university study. Their educational experiences are characterised by large classes, didactic forms of instruction and rote learning, which ill prepare them for the critical thinking, deep level comprehension of material and academic debate required at university (Bulman, 1996). In addition to these cognitive difficulties they face concerns of an emotional nature including feelings of powerlessness, loneliness and low self esteem (Coleman, 1993), as well as inter-personal difficulties, interacting with white students and lecturers (Jay and D'Augelli, 1991). Finally they face broad socio-political and campus ecological challenges, including difficulties dealing with the university bureaucracy (Agar, 1990) and experiences of racism (Brown, 1997).

Analysis of student development initiatives over the last decade, in chapter four, reveals few attempts to address these psycho-social concerns, and an almost exclusive focus on cognitive, meta-cognitive and linguistic difficulties. This is despite a large body of local and international literature demonstrating the impact of such non-cognitive factors on academic performance (Barnsley, 1992; Coleman, 1993; Tracey and Sedlacek, 1985 and Van Overwalle, 1989). The recent change in focus in the field of academic development from student development to wider processes of mainstreaming and transformation (Sanders and Seneque, 1992) is also a cause of concern. It leaves unchanged, students' experiences of powerlessness and ill-equips them to participate in these wider processes of transformation.

The present study therefore targeted student development, based on the assumption that the empowerment of individual students is an essential first step before they can make meaningful contribution to wider change processes. The study therefore aimed to design a holistic programme to address their academic difficulties as well as experiences of powerlessness. The theory of empowerment provided a theoretical foundation, guiding principles and

methodology which informed this intervention. Aspects of empowerment theory that were central to the design of the programme included the boosting of naturally occurring competencies, a collaborative style of interaction between tutor and students, a facilitative rather than expert leadership role, and emphasis on group interaction and co-operative learning (Kieffer, 1984; Rappaport, 1981 and 1987; Swift, 1984 and Zimmerman, 1995).

The programme was subject to rigorous evaluation, using an action research methodology, which is particularly suited to the evaluation of empowerment interventions (Lazarus, 1985). Quantitative results indicated significantly higher final Psychology 120 marks for programme participants, compared to a group who had participated in a course revision programme. These students, in turn, performed better than a control group, who had not attended any additional tutorial programme. The use of two comparison groups allowed for the exclusion of motivation and small group, tutorial-based teaching as confounding variables, and the isolation of an effect specifically due to the empowerment focus. Participants in the empowerment programme also showed a significant improvement in performance over the semester, while those in the control group showed a significant decline in performance over time.

Qualitative results from an evaluation questionnaire and focus group discussions revealed that participants considered the empowerment programme to have been beneficial. Aspects that were particularly valued included revision of course content, the focus on empowerment, student control of the direction of the programme, and group discussions. Concerns that were raised included insufficient time, slight unease between members of different race groups and requests for more course revision. Some students also referred to the tension between wanting to improve their academic performance through course revision, but which would allow them to remain passive and dependent on the tutor's expertise, and the desire to be empowered, which required longer-term, far-reaching changes.

A secondary aim of the project was to design a reliable and valid measure of empowerment, addressing the current lack of instruments for the measurement of empowerment. The overall reliability of the measure was found to be good, and comparable with other measures of empowerment (Short and Rinehart, 1992 and Wilson, 1993). Factor analysis identified four

factors, similar to Zimmerman's (1995) components of psychological empowerment, adapted to the academic context, suggesting that the instrument is a valid measure of empowerment.

Results revealed that participants in the empowerment programme scored significantly higher than non-participants on seven of the ten sub-scales, and the overall measure. Lack of pre-testing meant that the possibility of participants having initially higher levels of empowerment than their peers, before joining the programme could not be excluded as a confounding variable. Supportive evidence from the evaluation, however, suggests that participants' confidence, control over their studies and sense of empowerment had grown as a result of participation in the programme. Students of higher academic ability also scored higher on the overall measure and four sub-scales than those of lower academic ability, while black students scored higher on four sub-scales, but not overall, than white students. No gender differences or differences according to participation in extra-mural activities were found.

11.2. CRITIQUE:

The present study aimed to bring together two divergent areas of theory and research, namely the largely cognitive field of academic development and the community based theory of empowerment. It sought to address present gaps in the research literature of both fields, thus extending and making an original contribution to both fields.

By adopting a holistic approach to student development and addressing psycho-social as well as cognitive needs, the study provided an alternative to the cognitive focus of academic development. By allowing students to control the direction of the programme, restricting the tutor's role to that of facilitator and emphasising students' existing strengths, the programme addressed academic development's silence on the issue of power imbalances between students and staff. Finally the study also met the paucity of academic development evaluation research, using multiple qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the programme's impact.

The study also sought to contribute to the theory and practice of empowerment, through application to an area that has received little attention in community psychology, namely

student academic performance. The use of multiple forms of evaluation also addressed the criticism of lack of methodological rigour and limited empirical support often aimed at empowerment interventions (Chavis *et al.*, 1983 and Lounsbury *et al.*, 1980). Finally, the study developed a reliable, valid measure of empowerment, which should prove useful in educational contexts, allowing for the comparison of the effects of empowering and traditional forms of education. This thus meets the need to quantify the outcomes of empowerment interventions.

Despite attempts to ensure rigour in the research design and data collection processes, it is impossible for applied research in naturalistic settings to achieve the same tightness of control possible in the laboratory (Lazarus, 1985). The complexity of educational contexts and the multiplicity of interacting factors impacting on educational outcomes also makes educational research particularly problematic and may account for the paucity of evaluation studies within the academic development literature (Agar, 1988). Although attempts were made to minimise their effects, some methodological flaws in the present study were, therefore, inevitable.

Firstly the tightness of the study's design was somewhat compromised due to comparisons between tutorial groups across two years of study. Although the Psychology 120 courses of 1993 and 1994 had the same textbook, covered the same content, used the same patterns of assessment and had similar mean final marks (54% in 1993 and 55% in 1994), the possibility of subtle differences contaminating results, existed. A tighter design would have been to offer two tutorial programmes in 1994, one aimed at course revision and one focussing on empowerment, and then to compare these groups with a control group of students from the same year. This would, however, have been unethical, as some students would have been denied an intervention that could have had greater impact on their performance than the other. The possibility also exists that students would have been more attracted to a revision programme, the benefits of which seem more immediately apparent, than to a programme aimed at empowerment.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the empowerment questionnaire yielded an overall reliability comparable with other studies (Short and Rinehart, 1992 and Wilson, 1993). The reliability of the sub-scales was, however, poor, perhaps due to the large number of sub-scales

included in the questionnaire, but the small number of items on each one. To improve reliability, therefore, fewer sub-scales, each containing more items could have been included.

The link between the factors identified on the current scale and Zimmerman's construct of psychological empowerment (1995) indicates that the scale has good construct validity (Leary, 1991). It also has good discriminant validity, and is able to distinguish between the empowerment of participants in the empowerment programme and non-participants (Leary, 1991). Its discriminant validity could be increased by conducting a discriminant function analysis to establish which dependent variables included in the study best separate participants from non-participants. The items on the scale were also based largely on existing literature rather than observations of actual study behaviour. To improve the ecological validity of the measure, discussions could have been held with students regarding their study behaviour and techniques, the results of which would have indicated areas for inclusion on the questionnaire. To improve the construct validity, an understanding of academic empowerment could have been workshopped with students and then used as the basis for questionnaire design.

Two methodological flaws also exist in the data collection of the empowerment questionnaire. Firstly, unequal samples of black and white participants and non-participants were used, skewing the data. This was, however, due to the practicalities of using subjects from an existing class of Psychology students. As there were limited numbers of black students in the class, and not all students were present on the day that data was collected, it was not possible to ensure equal numbers of participants and non-participants in the sample.

Secondly, participants' empowerment scores before attending the empowerment programme were not collected, thus limiting the conclusions that could be drawn about the causal influence of the programme on empowerment levels. It should be remembered however, that the goal of this part of the study was to determine whether a reliable and valid measure of empowerment, applicable to the South African tertiary educational context, could be created. The instrument was thus a tentative, exploratory measure of academic empowerment and investigation of some of the variables on which it depends. To gather pre-intervention data would have resulted in too large a data set for the purposes of this thesis.

Several practical criticisms related to the empowerment programme were raised by students in the evaluation. One of the biggest concerns was insufficient time available for development, a concern echoed by a number of authors (Capoor and Vakharia,1995; Kieffer, 1984 and Richard, 1995). As mentioned previously, time concerns highlight the tension between students' short term needs for revision and skills development, of the kind traditionally offered by academic development, and empowerment, which requires a long term process of growth. The duration of the programme was, however, constrained by the length of a semester. As students were volunteering an hour of their time every week, it was not considered fair to ask them to attend more often. Attempts were thus made to maximise the time available, such as providing exercises for self study, encouraging the formation of peer study groups and allocating different tasks to discussion groups to ensure maximum coverage of material.

The lengthy time required for development leads to another important criticism, commonly levelled against voluntary student development initiatives, and applicable to this programme, namely the drain on resources. It is argued that voluntary, supplementary programmes are simply not effective to deal with the large numbers of under-prepared students in this country (Moulder, 1991). Schroen *et al.* (1994) found, for example, that the huge demand for Supplemental Instruction on a local campus resulted in unwieldy groups of 40 or so students, rather than the 10 advocated by the originators of the programme. Such arguments are used to justify the strategy of mainstreaming of academic development (Bulman, 1996).

While this programme is labour and time intensive, many of the above principles can be applied to mainstream courses, as achieved by Taylor and Burgess (1995), described in chapter six (6.2.2.). Strategies such as the Jigsaw technique (Aronson *et al.*, 1978), roleplay, discussion, and research tasks can be used, even in large classes. Participatory techniques can also be combined with traditional lecturing, as achieved in the Science Foundation Programme (Grayson, 1994), discussed in chapter four (4.3.4.). In addition, strategies targeting student empowerment can, and should be combined with those at the level of curriculum development.

Another concern raised by students was the hint of unease between participants of different race groups. While this was only mentioned by a few students, it is a matter of concern. Attempts

were made to address this by ensuring a good racial mix within discussion groups and using exercises and icebreakers to encourage participants to get to know one another. Comments from some respondents also suggested that different needs may have existed among sub-groups of participants, such as black and white students, or those of higher and lower academic performance, leading a few students to request that separate groups with different foci be offered. Some students, for example, requested the need for more course revision and less emphasis on academic skills and empowerment which they had covered elsewhere, while others particularly valued the focus on empowerment. While it is important to address the needs of all participants, it would be difficult to offer different groups without some being stigmatised as remedial or without this being interpreted as a form of racism.

In addition to the above methodological and practical concerns, the study raises two concerns of a more theoretical nature. The criticism could be levelled against this thesis, as against much empowerment research, that its focus is limited to an individual level of analysis, ignoring broader community and organisational processes of empowerment and transformation. Such a criticism is valid one, and was also raised by a few participants in the focus group discussions:

> *Empowerment is important and must be included, yet old lecturers don't understand the students' perspective. The lecturers also need to be empowered.*

> *I think the department still treats students in a racist manner. We are still pigeonholed according to our race.*

Although the focus was on individual forms of empowerment, wider transformation processes and the role students could play in these were seen as an integral part of the empowerment process. Through the use of role play and research activities, students were encouraged to apply the strategies developed to their participation in Psychology, other courses and wider aspects of university functioning. Broader aspects of departmental and institutional structure and functioning impacting on student empowerment were also discussed. The empowerment of individual students was also conceptualised as an essential first step before organisational empowerment can succeed, running parallel to broader processes of change, rather than

replacing these. This was based on the assumption that organisational transformation depends firstly on the empowerment of individuals (Rich *et al.*, 1995). As long as students remain the most powerless group in the university hierarchy (Gray, 1984), whose voice is unheard in transformation processes, the effects of wider change processes will be limited. Studies such as the current one are, therefore, a necessary first step to empower students to participate as rightful members in broader processes of transformation.

The above issue raises the question of whether participants in the empowerment programme were truly empowered. If one defines empowerment as a growing sense of control coupled with greater participation in the community (Rappaport, 1984b), then participants were indeed empowered. Evidence suggests that their sense of confidence, and control over their studies grew as a result of participating in the programme. There is also evidence of a wider impact on students' personal life, social interactions, confidence to approach staff and performance in other courses. Some authors, however, suggest that true empowerment requires a change to pre-existing power relations and a growth in the formal status of the previously disempowered group (Cummins, 1986; Gruber and Trickett, 1986 and Serrano-Garcia, 1984). If one adopts this approach then it is debatable whether students were empowered. Although there is evidence of wider processes of transformation occurring in South African universities, with students invited to participate in these (University of Natal, 1994), in many cases it is too early to determine the effects of these processes on hierarchical power relations between staff and students. The current study could, however, form an essential first stage in a longitudinal study exploring empowerment at the individual, departmental and institutional levels.

11.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

Viewed as an initial stage in a wider process of change, this study lays the foundation for much future research. Following student empowerment, transformation at departmental, faculty and university level could be studied, with particular reference to the role of students at all levels. The relationship between individual and organisational empowerment could also be explored. Emphasis could be placed on whether Rich *et al.*'s (1995) claim that individual empowerment precedes organisational empowerment is verified. Alternatively, results may support Speer and

Hughey's (1995) claim that structural changes in power at the organisational level impact on individuals, who then become empowered by participating in these processes.

Narrowing the focus to the study of student empowerment, there are a number of areas requiring future exploration. Firstly, the long term impact of a programme such as this one could be explored, in terms of retention and graduation rates, as well as the effect on performance in other disciplines. The wider impact of the programme on participation in student politics, sports and social activities, residence committees and other aspects of university life could also be explored. In addition, attempts could be made to replicate the programme in other disciplines, to determine whether comparable results are found.

The empowerment questionnaire, used in this study merely as an exploratory tool also offers many future research opportunities. Additional statistical analysis could be performed on the current data set, including discriminant function analysis to determine which of the dependent measures included in the study best discriminate between participants in the empowerment programme and non-participants. Regression analysis could also be used to determine which combination of measures best predict students' academic performance. A canonical correlation could also be used to explore the relationship between a set of scores related to academic performance and scores from the sub-scales included in the questionnaire. Results of the present factor analysis could also be subject to further verification and reliability testing.

Finally, it appears from current results that the empowerment questionnaire may provide a useful tool for discriminating between participants in the empowerment programme and non-participants. It could therefore be used in future to determine the empowerment levels of participants in an empowerment programme, both before and after participation. This would provide useful data regarding black students' initial levels of empowerment or powerlessness, on entry into the university. Comparison with post-intervention data would also determine the impact of an empowerment programme on altering initial levels of empowerment.

This study should therefore be seen as an initial exploration into the application of empowerment theory to student development. As an attempt to develop and evaluate a

programme to meet the pressing concern of black student poor performance at university, the study seeks to extend the field of academic development. As an application of the theory of empowerment to the tertiary academic sector, including the design of a measure of academic empowerment, the study also makes a contribution to empowerment theory. Together, these two diverse areas have the potential to both improve poor academic performance and equip students to contribute to current processes of university transformation, as the present set of results indicate.

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APPENDIX A

CONTRACT OF AGREEMENT -
EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME CONTRACT

1.   TUTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

I .... agree to the following conditions for the duration of this Empowerment Programme, 1994:

1.1.   I will prepare adequately for every class.

1.2.   I will allow students to determine the direction of the programme and limit myself to a facilitative role.

1.3.   I will be flexible and adapt the programme to suit students' changing needs.

1.4.   I will provide weekly readings and revision exercises and provide regular, prompt feedback to students who choose to submit these for comments.

1.5.   I will make myself available for an hour every day to provide material and emotional advice and support to participants in this programme.

2.   STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

I .... agree to the following conditions for the duration of this Empowerment Programme, 1994:

2.1.   I will make every effort to attend the tutorials for this programme every week.

2.2.   I will make every attempt to get to know my fellow participants and contribute actively to all discussions.

2.3.   I will attempt all revision exercises and research tasks given to me and make use of all readings.

2.4.   I will keep all handouts in a file which I will bring with me to class every week.

SIGNED..

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

EVALUATION OF EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS:

AGE: ——————— SEX: ———————
RACE: ——————— YEAR OF STUDY: ———————
MATRIC EXAMINING AUTHORITY: (DET, NED etc.) ———————

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU ATTENDED PSYCHOLOGY EDP TUTS THIS SEMESTER?: [TICK ONE]

Every week		Almost every week		4 - 8 times		Fewer than 4 times	

PLEASE SELECT YOUR CLASS OF PASS/FAIL IN PSYCHOLOGY110: [TICK ONE]

75% or above		68-74%		60-67%		50-59%		40-49%		below 40%	

If you are feeling anxious or under stress, because of your performance in Psychology 120, who are you most likely to approach for help: [TICK ONE]

lecturer		E.D.P. tutor		Student Counselling Services		a friend		no one	

If you have a problem understanding something in Psychology 120, who are you most likely to approach for help: [TICK ONE]

lecturer		E.D.P. tutor		senior student		a friend		no one	

If you have a complaint about the Psychology 120 course, who are you likely to approach: [TICK ONE]

lecturer		E.D.P. tutor		Course Co-ordinator		Class Representative		no one	

Rate all of the following channels of help for problems, complaints or questions related to Psychology 120, according to how often you have made use of them:

Rate each option: 1 if used often   2 if used fairly often

3 if used rarely   4 if never used.

Lecturer		E.D.P. tutor	
Tutor		Course Co-ordinator	
Class Representative		Friends	

SECTION B: EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME CLASSES:

1. CONTENT COVERED:

Please rate each of the following content areas covered in the programme in terms of how useful or not you found them to your studying, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
not at all useful	not really useful	undecided	fairly useful	extremely useful

1. Setting goals for studying, using the Perception chapter	-2 -1 0 1 2
2. Time management	-2 -1 0 1 2
3. Summarising techniques (tables; spider diagrams etc.)	-2 -1 0 1 2
4. Introduction to empowerment	-2 -1 0 1 2
5. Techniques for behaving in an empowered way	-2 -1 0 1 2
6. Memory aids	-2 -1 0 1 2
7. Overcoming test anxiety	-2 -1 0 1 2
8. Revision of difficult lecture content	-2 -1 0 1 2
9. Revision of practicals	-2 -1 0 1 2
10. Revision of old exam questions and past tests	-2 -1 0 1 2

*Please list any areas which you feel should have received **more emphasis** in the empowerment programme.*

_____

_____

*Please list any areas which you feel should have received **less emphasis** in this programme.*

_____

_____

*Please list any areas which you feel should have been **omitted** from this programme.*

_____

_____

*Please list any additional areas which you feel should have been **included** in this programme.*

_____

_____

2.   HANDOUTS:

Please rate the following in terms of how useful or not useful you found them to your studying behaviour, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
not at all useful	not really useful	undecided	fairly useful	extremely useful

Extra readings - e.g. "Can apes use language?"	-2 -1 0 1 2
Handouts regarding study skills e.g. "Test anxiety"	-2 -1 0 1 2
Revision exercises e.g. "Memory multiple choice questions"	-2 -1 0 1 2

Please rate the following in terms of how often you made use of the handout, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
used none of it	used a little of it	used some of it	used most of it	used all of it

Extra readings - e.g. "Can apes use language?"	-2 -1 0 1 2
Handouts regarding study skills e.g. "Test anxiety"	-2 -1 0 1 2
Revision exercises e.g. "Memory multiple choice questions"	-2 -1 0 1 2

Please rate the following in terms of the impact or lack of impact they had on your enjoyment of Psychology, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0
greatly reduced my enjoyment	somewhat reduced my enjoyment	had no effect

1	2
somewhat increased my enjoyment	greatly increased my enjoyment

Extra readings - e.g. "Can apes use language?"	-2 -1 0 1 2
Handouts regarding study skills e.g. "Test anxiety"	-2 -1 0 1 2
Revision exercises e.g. "Memory multiple choice questions"	-2 -1 0 1 2

*Do you have any other comments regarding the use of **extra readings** in this programme?*

_____

_____

*Do you have any comments regarding the use of **study skills handouts** in this programme?*

_____

_____

*Do you have any comments regarding the use of **revision exercises** in this programme?*

_____

_____

3. GROUP DISCUSSION:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
strongly disagree	slightly disagree	undecided	slightly agree	strongly agree

1.	I feel more able to air my views in a group, than if I hadn't attended the empowerment programme.	-2 -1 0 1 2
2.	The empowerment programme has not helped me to feel comfortable in sharing my difficulties in group situations.	-2 -1 0 1 2
3.	I am able to participate more actively in group discussions than I would have been if I hadn't attended the empowerment programme.	-2 -1 0 1 2
4.	Insufficient opportunity was given for us to air our own problems in the empowerment programme.	-2 -1 0 1 2
5.	There was sufficient chance for small group discussion in the empowerment programme.	-2 -1 0 1 2

Do you have any further comments regarding the use of group discussions in this programme?

_____

_____

4. TEACHING METHODOLOGY:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
strongly disagree	slightly disagree	undecided	slightly agree	strongly agree

1.	I was not involved in determining the aims of this programme	-2 -1 0 1 2
2.	The tutor adapted this programme to suit our needs.	-2 -1 0 1 2
3.	This programme is run in a democratic manner.	-2 -1 0 1 2
4.	Attendance in this programme has not increased my ability to work independently.	-2 -1 0 1 2
5.	The activities used at the beginning of each session increased my enjoyment of Psychology.	-2 -1 0 1 2
6.	By attending this programme I have developed some of the academic skills I need to succeed in Psychology.	-2 -1 0 1 2
7.	I have not become aware of my strengths by attending this programme.	-2 -1 0 1 2
8.	By attending this programme I have become aware of my weaknesses.	-2 -1 0 1 2

*Do you have any comments regarding the aim of **developing independent study** in this programme?*

_____

_____

*Do you have any comments regarding the aim of **empowering students** in this programme?*

_____

_____

*Do you have any comments regarding the aim of **developing academic skills** in this programme?*

_____

_____

*Do you have any comments regarding the aim of **making Psychology enjoyable and intrinsically motivating**, in this programme?*

_____

_____

5.   STUDENT EMPOWERMENT:

Rate the effect that the programme's focus on developing empowered students has had in the following areas, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
very harmful	somewhat harmful	undecided	somewhat helpful	very helpful

1. Your use of study skills.	-2 -1 0 1 2
2. Your performance in Psychology.	-2 -1 0 1 2
3. Your performance in other courses.	-2 -1 0 1 2
4. Your participation in university life.	-2 -1 0 1 2
5. Your ability to take responsibility for your studying.	-2 -1 0 1 2
6. Your feelings of self-control over your studying.	-2 -1 0 1 2
7. Your ability to seek help in Psychology if you need it.	-2 -1 0 1 2
8. Your self-confidence.	-2 -1 0 1 2
9. Your ability to face problems rather than ignoring them.	-2 -1 0 1 2

*Are there any aspects of empowerment that you feel should have been **included** in the programme?*

_____

_____

*Are there any aspects of empowerment you feel should have been **excluded** from the programme?*

_____

_____

6. GENERAL:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, using the following scale:

-2	-1	0	1	2
strongly disagree	slightly disagree	undecided	slightly agree	strongly agree

1.	The empowerment programme has not met my expectations.	-2 -1 0 1 2
2.	This programme has not helped me cope with Psychology 120.	-2 -1 0 1 2
3.	My enthusiasm for Psychology has increased due to my participation in this programme	-2 -1 0 1 2
4.	An empowerment programme similar to this should continue to be offered to Psychology students.	-2 -1 0 1 2

What effect (if any) has attendance in this programme had on the following areas: (Please explain)

Your enjoyment of Psychology?

_____

_____

Your academic performance?

_____

_____

Your studying behaviour?

_____

_____

Your self confidence?

_____

_____

*What is the **most valuable** thing you have gained by attending the empowerment programme?*

_____

_____

_____

*Were there any **negative effects** from attending this programme (please explain)?*

_____

_____

*What **changes** would you suggest should be made to the present empowerment. programme for future Psychology I students?*

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOCUS GROUP EVALUATION OF EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME:

(Group members to all be given name tags on arrival, and to sit in a circle)

Hi everyone. My name is .... This discussion hopes to gain your attitudes and opinions regarding the empowerment programme you have all participated in. With your permission I will be tape recording the discussion so that we don't miss any of the details of your comments. None of your names will be included, however, so please be as open and honest as you can. We're also interested in getting as full and detailed an understanding as possible, so please explain all of your comments as fully as possible. please also make sure that only one person talks at a time, otherwise we'll miss the detail on the tape recorder. Perhaps we can just start off by introducing ourselves. I am .... *(all introduce themselves)*

1.   How do you feel about having participated in this programme?

- ▸   What do you think you have gained or not gained by attending?
- ▸   What aspects of the programme did you find useful or useless?
- ▸   What motivated you to keep attending throughout the semester?

2.   A set of aims was developed at the beginning of the programme. i would like to assess your responses to some of these. How successfully do you think the programme realised the following aims:

- ▸   Developing autonomous learners?
- ▸   Making psychology more enjoyable?
- ▸   Being student centred and democratic?

3.   Why do you think the programme adopted a focus on empowerment? Do you think this was successfully realised? Did you find this a useful aspect of the programme or do you think the programme should have emphasised something else?

Did the focus on empowerment have any impact at all on:

- ▸   your academic work
- ▸   your relations with staff in this department
- ▸   your work in this course
- ▸   your work in other courses?

4.   How useful to your studying did you find the readings and handouts that were given in the programme? Were there any other areas you would have liked to receive extra information about?

5.   At the beginning of the programme you all agreed on a set of topics to be covered in the programme. How relevant did you find the content areas covered, to your personal academic needs? How closely do you think the content covered matched the areas you selected at the beginning of the course? Were there other areas that should have been included?

6.   Do you have any suggestions to make about how the programme could be improved in future?

Thank you very much for giving up your time this afternoon. Your comments are much appreciated.

APPENDIX D

EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questionnaire as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will be anonymous.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS:

AGE: ——————— SEX: ———————

RACE: ——————— YEAR OF STUDY: ———————

MATRIC EXAMINING AUTHORITY: (DET, NED etc.) ———————

DO YOU ATTEND PSYCHOLOGY E.D.P. TUTS?: ———————

CLASS OF PASS/FAIL IN PSYCHOLOGY110: [TICK ONE]

75% or above		68-74%		60-67%		50-59%		40-49%		below 40%	

List any sports team, club, political or religious group, or organisation, at or outside university that you are a member of, and indicate any position of responsibility you have held in any of these (e.g. class representative, church choir, soccer team):

———————————————————————————————————————

———————————————————————————————————————

What career do you hope to follow on completion of your degree? (specify if you haven't decided)

———————————————————————————————————————

If you are feeling anxious or under stress, because of your performance in Psychology 120, who are you most likely to approach for help: [TICK ONLY ONE]

lecturer		E.D.P. tutor		Student Counselling Services		a friend		no one	

If you have a problem understanding something in Psychology 120, who are you most likely to approach for help: [TICK ONE]

lecturer		E.D.P. Tutor		senior student		a friend		no one	

If you have a complaint about the Psychology 120 course, who are you likely to approach: [TICK ONE]

lecturer		Course Co-ordinator		E.D.P. tutor		Class Representative		no one	

Rate all of the following channels of help for problems, complaints or questions related to Psychology 120, according to how often you have made use of them:

Rate each option: 1   if used at least once a week   2   if used fairly often

3   if used rarely   4   if never used.

Lecturer		E.D.P. tutor	
Tutor		Course Co-ordinator	
Class Rep.		Friends	

Please circle one of the numbers on the scale next to every statement, indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement:

2:    you strongly agree with the statement   -1:   you slightly disagree with the statement

1:    you slightly agree with the statement   -2:   you strongly disagree with the statement

0:    you neither agree nor disagree

1.	The most likely reason a student might fail Psychology is that s/he hasn't worked hard enough.	-2 -1 0 1 2
2.	I use summarising techniques like tables and diagrams to organise my Psychology notes.	-2 -1 0 1 2
3.	I feel comfortable approaching Psychology lecturers for help or to exchange ideas.	-2 -1 0 1 2
4.	I try to set regular and manageable goals for my studying.	-2 -1 0 1 2
5.	If I am invited out on an evening when I should be studying, I will usually leave my work for another evening.	-2 -1 0 1 2
6.	I have little confidence in my ability to succeed in this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
7.	Students must be more active in fighting for their right to a good education within the university context.	-2 -1 0 1 2
8.	I am proud of my performance in Psychology 110.	-2 -1 0 1 2
9.	I am far too shy to speak in front of the Psychology class.	-2 -1 0 1 2
10.	At university we should be given more opportunity to work in groups.	-2 -1 0 1 2
11.	People like me don't have much of a chance to succeed at university.	-2 -1 0 1 2
12.	Much of this course has to be learnt parrot-fashion/by rote.	-2 -1 0 1 2
13.	If I don't understand something in this course, I often leave it, hoping the problem will go away.	-2 -1 0 1 2
14.	It's difficult for me to organise my study time: at school we were told what to do and when to do it.	-2 -1 0 1 2
15.	Students should have a say about what is taught in Psychology, and should use this voice to influence course content.	-2 -1 0 1 2

16.	If I felt that a Psychology lecturer was racist or sexist, I would try and do something about this.	-2 -1 0 1 2
17.	It's more important to please my parents by working hard than to please myself.	-2 -1 0 1 2
18.	There are lots of things about myself that I would change if I could.	-2 -1 0 1 2
19.	I rarely speak in Psychology tutorials	-2 -1 0 1 2
20.	I am a competitive person.	-2 -1 0 1 2
21.	I do best when I work alone.	-2 -1 0 1 2
22.	There is a direct connection between how hard I study for Psychology and how well I do in the course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
23.	I often ask myself questions as I study, to test my understanding of the material.	-2 -1 0 1 2
24.	If I don't understand something in this course, I am likely to ask the lecturer or tutor for help.	-2 -1 0 1 2
25.	If it wasn't for exams, I doubt whether I would do much work in this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
26.	I ensure that I read ahead in Wade and Tavris, before each day's lecture.	-2 -1 0 1 2
27.	Group exercises are unfair as some people work harder on the project than others.	-2 -1 0 1 2
28.	If you work consistently in this course, you will do well in it.	-2 -1 0 1 2
29.	If I don't understand something in Psychology, I will ask the lecturer after the class.	-2 -1 0 1 2
30.	This course is so difficult, I often feel like just giving up.	-2 -1 0 1 2
31.	The main reason I took this course is that it is an interesting one.	-2 -1 0 1 2
32.	I enjoy attending Psychology lectures and am enthusiastic about the course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
33.	If I disagreed with something a Psychology lecturer said, I would express my opinion either during or after the class.	-2 -1 0 1 2
34.	Succeeding in Psychology seems to depend more on good luck than on hard work.	-2 -1 0 1 2

35.	I enjoy this course because it challenges me to relate what I'm taught to my own experiences.	-2 -1 0 1 2
36.	The exams and tests for Psychology are so difficult that I have little control over my performance in the course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
37.	I find it difficult to know what is important in Wade and Tavris, and should be learned for exams.	-2 -1 0 1 2
38.	I try to devote a fixed amount of time to work on Psychology every week.	-2 -1 0 1 2
39.	I usually enjoy the challenge of a new section in the Psychology course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
40.	I am confident of my ability to succeed in this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
41.	I struggle at university because there is no one to make me work hard.	-2 -1 0 1 2
42.	I have offered suggestions to the class representative before, concerning this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
43.	If we are asked in a Psychology tutorial, what we don't understand in a section, I usually keep quiet.	-2 -1 0 1 2
44.	I often feel that there's no point in working hard in this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
45.	I am able to see links between various parts of the Psychology course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
46.	I am highly motivated to succeed in this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
47.	I enjoy discussing ideas in Psychology tutorials.	-2 -1 0 1 2
48.	If I have a question in a Psychology tutorial, I often ask a friend to voice it for me.	-2 -1 0 1 2
49.	I often feel that I have too much work for Psychology and not enough time to do it in.	-2 -1 0 1 2
50.	I am the master of my own fate.	-2 -1 0 1 2
51.	The reason students do badly in this course is that the tests are usually unfair.	-2 -1 0 1 2
52.	I find it difficult to determine the main points of the Psychology lectures unless they're written on an overhead.	-2 -1 0 1 2
53.	My decision to take this course was influenced more by job prospects than by interest in the course.	-2 -1 0 1 2

54.	My habit of putting off work for this course leaves me with too much to do at the end of the term.	-2 -1 0 1 2
55.	If I felt a Psychology lecturer had marked my assignment unfairly, I would confront him/her about this.	-2 -1 0 1 2
56.	Doing badly in a Psychology test or assignment, challenges me to put more effort into my work, knowing I will do better next time.	-2 -1 0 1 2
57.	By working consistently, I have control over how well I do in Psychology.	-2 -1 0 1 2
58.	My work in this course often makes me feel ashamed.	-2 -1 0 1 2
59.	I do not know many other students in this course.	-2 -1 0 1 2
60.	If I don't understand something in this course, I try to find an answer as soon as possible.	-2 -1 0 1 2
61.	I am generally able to voice my opinion openly.	-2 -1 0 1 2
62.	Factors outside of myself exert a very strong influence over the choices I make in life.	-2 -1 0 1 2
63.	When study leave arrives, my Psychology assignments and readings are all up to date.	-2 -1 0 1 2
64.	I don't believe in challenging what Psychology lecturers say - they are better informed than me.	-2 -1 0 1 2
65.	I usually revise for Psychology with other students.	-2 -1 0 1 2
66.	It's not worth trying to evaluate teaching in this department - no one listens to students.	-2 -1 0 1 2
67.	I often ask friends for help with Psychology assignments because I battle to know what is expected of me.	-2 -1 0 1 2
68.	I often read beyond what I have to for Psychology tests when the section interests me.	-2 -1 0 1 2
69.	By taking an active role in political and social organisations, students can influence major university decisions.	-2 -1 0 1 2
70.	I prefer university, where I have to take responsibility for my own learning, as opposed to school where we were told what to do.	-2 -1 0 1 2
71.	I usually leave questions I have, or things I don't understand in Psychology 120, until I start revising for tests.	-2 -1 0 1 2

72.	If I am confused about something in this course, I have several friends who can help me.	-2 -1 0 1 2
73.	I rarely have trouble finding a partner that I know at the practicals.	-2 -1 0 1 2
74.	I try to stick to a regular study timetable every week.	-2 -1 0 1 2
75.	It's not worth trying to change things at this university - no one listens to students.	-2 -1 0 1 2

SECTION C:

PLEASE ANSWER EITHER QUESTION 1 OR QUESTION 2:

1. FOR STUDENTS WHO FEEL THEY DID WELL IN THE PSYCHOLOGY 110 EXAM:

Choose four main reasons, and rank them in order of importance (1 being the most important), for your success in Psychology 110:

a.	help from friends	⎯⎯	b.	good luck	⎯⎯
c.	easiness of the test	⎯⎯	d.	high ability	⎯⎯
e.	hard work before the test	⎯⎯	f.	good teaching	⎯⎯
g.	attendance at E.D.P. tuts.	⎯⎯	h.	doing revision exercises	⎯⎯
i.	fair exam	⎯⎯	j.	other - specify	⎯⎯

2. FOR STUDENTS WHO FEEL THEY DID BADLY IN THE PSYCHOLOGY 110 EXAM:

Choose four main reasons, and rank them in order of importance (1 being the most important), for your doing badly in Psychology 110:

a.	lack of ability	⎯⎯	b.	difficulty of the test	⎯⎯
c.	laziness	⎯⎯	d.	bad teaching	⎯⎯
e.	bad luck	⎯⎯	f.	sickness/fatigue	⎯⎯
g.	not working hard enough	⎯⎯	h.	unfair exam	⎯⎯
i.	not attending lectures often enough	⎯⎯	j.	other - specify	⎯⎯

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE OF HANDOUTS AND ACTIVITIES USED IN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

1. ACADEMIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

For each of the following questions, circle the block that most closely describes you.

How would I describe:

my self-esteem as it affects my studies?	very happy	happy	feeling neutral	depressed	very depressed
my feelings about what I am learning in this course	excited	interested	neutral	bored	hating the course
my motivation to succeed in this course	highly motivated	fairly motivated	neutral	rather unmotivated	totally unmotivated
my approach to difficult work	enthusiastic	prepared to try	cautious	anxious to delay	tempted to give up
my ability to manage my study time	well planned	organised	semi-organised	disorganised	chaotic
my note taking and file organisation	neat/ organised	tidy	not bad	disorganised	a mess
my ability to set accurate & achievable work goals	high	moderate	unsure	poor	I never set goals
my approach to reading the textbook	enthusiastic	concentrating	attentive	easily distracted	bored
my writing performance in this course	high	moderate	average	weak	very poor
my approach towards tests and exams	very confident	fairly confident	unsure	nervous	terrified
my approach towards homework exercises	enthusiastic enjoy them	confident of success	unsure	confused	terrified
assertiveness - ability to approach the lecturer	very confident	fairly confident	a little nervous	very nervous	never approach lecturer
self confidence and ability to discuss issues in tuts	very confident	fairly confident	a little nervous	very nervous	I never speak in tuts
feeling of being in control of how well I do in this course	totally in control	fairly in control	neutral	I have little control over how I do	I have no control over how I do

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ability to work independently	work well alone	work fairly well alone	unsure	often ask for help	never know what is expected of me in this course

Now draw a straight line from the circle you filled in for question 1, to the one you filled in for question 2, from 2 to 3 etc. Where the line goes towards the left, it is pointing out your areas of strength, and where it goes to the right indicates your weaknesses. Identify your strengths and weaknesses as indicated in the above chart:

_____

_____

_____

Do you have other strengths which you think may help your work in this course?

_____

_____

_____

Do you have other weaknesses which you think will hinder your performance in this course?

_____

_____

_____

2.   NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

Please reflect on the specific needs and concerns related to your performance in Psychology, which you would like this programme to address . Identify four areas in which you feel you need to develop in order to succeed in Psychology 120:

_____

_____

_____

_____

In groups:

Think about your academic strengths. Which strengths are common to several group members? Which are unique to one person? Are there any important areas which no one regards as their strength? How can the combination of strengths within your group help one another achieve success?

_____

_____

What about your areas of weakness. Are there areas common to all of you?

_____

Are there any academic needs you have identified which you share with other members of your group?

_____

Which are the most common needs within the group?

_____

_____

Try to rank the needs you have identified in terms of how important you think they are:

_____

_____

What can this programme do to help you satisfy the needs you have identified? Are there some needs you think should be focussed upon more than others? Which ones?

_____

_____

TIME MANAGEMENT:

There's lots to do - we have a very busy schedule.

At 8 o'clock we get up and then we spend from 8 to 9 daydreaming.

From 9.00 to 9.30 we take an early morning nap.

From 9.30 to 10.30 we dawdle and delay.

From 10.30 to 11.30 we take our late early morning nap.

From 11.30 to 12.00 we bide our time and then eat our lunch.

From 1.00 to 2.00 we linger and loiter.

From 2.00 to 2.30 we take our early afternoon nap.

From 2.30 to 3.30 we put off for tomorrow what we could have done today.

From 3.30 to 4.00 we take our early late afternoon nap.

From 4.00 to 5.00 we loaf and lounge until dinner.

From 6.00 to 7.00 we dilly-dally.

From 7.00 to 8.00 we take our early evening nap, and then for an hour before we go to bed at 9.00 we waste time.

As you can see that leaves no time for brooding, lagging, plodding or procrastinating and if we stopped to think or laugh we'd never get anything done.

Time management is largely a new skill at university. At school your schoolwork was accomplished during a normal school day, and specific homework was set by the teacher. Now most of your work is done by yourself, outside of lecture time, so it's very important that you plan how to use your time most efficiently.

1. CIRCLE OF TIME:

1.1. Draw a circular cake that represents the total amount of time in a week that you spend on various activities. Subdivide the amount of time spent at university into time for each course you are taking:

- ► What do you feel it reveals about the way you are living now?
- ► Do you feel that there is an imbalance anywhere?

1.2.   Draw a second circle indicating the amount of time you would like to spend on each activity:

2.   TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

2.1.   Increase-decrease method:

You only have so much time in a day. If one area doesn't have enough time devoted to it, you need to take time away from somewhere else in the pie.

2.2.   A Time Management Schedule:

Keep the following principles in mind when drawing up a schedule:

► Keep in mind your goals.
► Strive for balance.
► Try to follow consistent patterns.
► Trade rather than eliminating activities.
► Study during your alert time.
► Tackle least-liked/hardest subjects first.
► Study close to class time.
► Schedule 50 min. blocks.
► Avoid marathon studying.

2.3.   EFFECTIVE LIST MAKING:

It is useful to make a list of things to do in a diary or notebook, for each day, for several reasons:

► You can stop worrying that you might forget.
► Writing down what you have to do reduces feeling of being overwhelmed.
► It helps you to determine what is most important.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY FOR DURING THE COMING WEEK:

1.   List Making:

▸   Make a list of all the things you have to do today.

▸   Add all the things you would like to do before today is through.

▸   Using coloured pens, place   a Red *   next to things you have to do today.

a Blue *   next to things you would like to do today.

a Green *   next to things it would be nice to do today,

but which could wait till tomorrow.

▸   Keep your list this week, and cross off an item as it's been achieved (acts as a reward).

▸   As soon as something new occurs, add it to the list and colour-code it.

▸   Try to keep a similar list for the rest of the week.

2.   Creating a Time Management Schedule:

On the attached timetable:

▸   Write in fixed activities outside of lectures in Red - e.g. meals, sleeping, playing tennis etc.

▸   Write in Blue all of your lectures, practicals and tutorials.

▸   Identify fixed assignments and estimate how long they will take

▸   Add these activities onto your timetable, in Green.

▸   Identify all study activities for each subject and estimate how long you will need for these - e.g. reading the chapter, adjusting lecture notes, doing revision exercises etc.

▸   Add these onto your timetable in Black.

▸   Add one or two flexible study blocks in Brown in case you have an unexpected assignment or have underestimated the time needed for something.

▸   Include time for leisure/social activities in Orange.

Try to stick to the timetable during the coming week.

3.   Time check:

Fill in the following questionnaire at the end of the week, reflecting at the end on:

▸   What does this say about how I have used my time this week?

▸   Is there anything I might want to change for next week?

WEEKLY TIME MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

For the week of _____

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12–6A.M.							
6–7:00							
7–8:00							
8–9:00							
9–10:00							
10–11:00							
11–12:00							
12–1:00							
1–2:00							
2–3:00							
3–4:00							
4–5:00							
5–6:00							
6–7:00							
7–8:00							
8–9:00							
9–10:00							
10–11:00							
11–12:00							

MY USE OF MY TIME ... (week, month, etc)

		FILL IN THIS COLUMN
1.	Over-all impressions of how I have spent the week	
2.	How much time have I given to what I enjoy?	
3.	How much time have I spent on what I don't enjoy?	
4.	Have I 'wasted time'? How much? How?	
5.	How much time was given to what I think is important?	
6.	Did I use time spent 'waiting' or travelling, constructively?	
7.	How much time did I allocate to my priorities?	
8.	How organized was I each day in knowing what I wanted to achieve?	
9.	Did anything not 'get done' that I wished had been done, because I 'put it off' until another time?	
10.	Have I used any time particularly successfully this week? Can I build on this next week?	
11.	Have I spent time on routines or habits I would like to break?	
12.	Have I given myself a reward for time well-spent?	
13.	Have I set myself some deadlines and met them?	
14.	Have I wasted other people's time? If so, how?	
15.	Have I found time to relax?	
16.	Have I asked frequently 'What's the best use of my time right now?'	

INTRODUCTION TO EMPOWERMENT:

What are the aspects you dislike most about this programme and the way it is run?

How easy or difficult is it for you to tell me how you feel? Why is it easy or difficult? What are the characteristics of a person who feels able to tell me how they feel (confident, assertive, empowered)?

1.   DEFINITIONS:

In groups, try to develop an understanding of what you think the following terms mean:

Empowerment   _____

Disempowerment _____

Assertiveness   _____

Discuss and develop a group definition of the three terms.

2.   SCENARIOS INVOLVING POWER RELATIONS:

Pick one of the following cards and in 30 seconds, tell me honestly what you would do in this situation:

- *You are accused of stealing money by the headmaster of your school. You didn't do it but you know who did.*
- *Your friend borrowed R10 last week and hasn't paid you back yet.*
- *You see a stranger looking into your neighbour's windows while he is away.*
- *Someone you know is spreading lies about you.*
- *The cashier at the ref. overcharged you.*
- *Your lecturer has added up your homework incorrectly.*
- *You can't hear the lecturer at the back of the classroom.*
- *You were ill and missed the test on Wednesday.*
- *Someone next to you is talking during the lecture and you can't concentrate.*

- *Your neighbour in res. has loud music on while you are studying.*

- *You feel your tutor has marked your tut work unfairly.*

- *You have lost your Wade and Tavris and have no money to buy a new one.*

- *You can't read the lecturer's overheads as the writing is too faint.*

- *The lecturer says "find a partner" at the practical, but you don't know anyone.*

Return to the definitions - is there anything you wish to modify?

3.   BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING OF EMPOWERMENT:

In order to develop a full understanding of empowerment and the processes involved therein, what aspects do we need information about?

- definition of terms

- differences between empowered and disempowered behaviours

- empowered behavioural techniques/ processes/ attitudes/ characteristics

- advantages and disadvantages to empowerment

- obstacles to being empowered

4.   EMPOWERMENT SCENARIOS:

In groups, identify several scenarios/ situations where you would like to behave in a more empowered manner, within the university context - e.g.:

- *You want to join the Students' Psychology Society but you feel that the activities are too Eurocentric and ignore your community.*

- *The psychology tests are always set in the evenings. You and many of your friends live far away and battle with transport in the evenings.*

In groups, discuss:

- How would you behave in this situation?

- How might an 'empowered' and a 'disempowered' student behave?

- What are the advantages/disadvantages to behaving in this way?

- What are some of the obstacles to behaving in an 'empowered' manner?

- What can you learn about your own behaviour from this situation?

- In what situations at university, can you behave in an empowered manner?

5.   RESEARCH ACTIVITY:

1.   Divide a sheet of paper into two columns.

2.   In one column, list several problems you have experienced in your own life, which you would like to be able to master by acting in an empowered manner.

3.   Rank these from 1 (the most severe problem) to ....

4.   Select the 3 most severe problems and in the second column write what you need to do to solve these problems.

5.   Attempt over the next two weeks to put what you have learnt about empowerment into practice, by addressing these three problem areas.

6.   Bring back answers to the following questions:

    ▸   How successful were you in addressing these problem areas?
    ▸   What obstacles existed to hinder your attempts to solve these problems?
    ▸   What were the advantages/disadvantages of your behaving in this way?
    ▸   What strategies do you think are essential to empowered behaviour?

EMPOWERMENT: BROADER CONTEXT

We've spent time talking and practicing various individual empowerment processes and strategies. What are the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach? What does it include? exclude?

By focussing solely on individual processes, rigid institutional structures and processes remain unchanged. We therefore need to shift attention from an individual to organisational level, or empowerment will be reduced to a skill or set of techniques, rather than a process that takes place between people in organisations. To ensure real change and real empowerment, we need to address each level of the departmental organisation:

- Attitudes: students need to take personal control over work
    need to assume responsibility for problems

- Departmental relationships: staff need to encourage feedback from students
    need to adopt a participatory approach
    team relationships become vital

- Organisational structure: policies and practices that allow for expression of empowerment
    open channels of communication between staff and students
    students empowered to make meaningful contribution to institutional processes of transformation

In addition to these factors, the department exists within a broader context of:
- the university
- the tertiary education system
- social/ political/ economic environment

What factors at each of these levels impacts on your performance?

GROUP WORK:

1. What organisational structures and features within this department help you to be an empowered student.

   _____

   _____

2. What organisational barriers/obstacles exist within this department that hinder the expression of your empowerment?

   _____

   _____

3. How can the department become a more empowered and empowering organisation? Think in terms of:

▸ Course content:

   _____

   _____

▸   Assessment methods:

   _____

   _____

▸ Teaching methods:

   _____

   _____

▸ Evaluation/feedback about the course:

   _____

   _____

▸ Departmental relationships:

   _____

   _____

REVISION EXERCISE - DEVELOPMENT

1. A reflex is:
a) a learned response to a stimulus
b) an instinct
c) a behavioural change due to maturation
d) a simple automatic behaviour
e) skills neonates have which they then outgrow

2. Which of the following would a newborn baby prefer to look at:
a) a colourful rattle
b) a baby bottle
c) a blanket
d) a human face
e) a pretty mobile

3. Jean Piaget is best known for his theory of:
a) attachment behaviour
b) cognitive development
c) language development
d) social development
e) moral development

4. Researchers originally hypothesised that bonding between mothers and infants would be facilitated if the mothers:
a) saw and held the infant immediately after birth
b) breast fed their infant extensively
c) were not separated from their babies even for a short time
d) were supported by their spouses during labour and delivery
e) if the mother was not under stress

5. A mother is holding her happy 8-month old baby. You come into the room and take the baby from her, The baby begins to cry. This is an example of:
a) attachment behaviour
b) weariness
c) stranger anxiety
d) bonding
e) the fact that you are not good with babies

6. Children in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development are capable of all of the following except one. Which one is not characteristic of this stage:
a) inductive reasoning
b) deductive reasoning
c) use of internal symbols
d) classifying
e) reversibility

7. The strange situation is intended to measure:
a) intellectual development
b) cultural awareness
c) moral development
d) bonding
e) quality of attachment

8. According to Ainsworth, the mother of an ambivalent child is:
a) rejecting and irritable
b) irritated and angry
c) rejecting
d) insensitive but not rejecting
e) angry and loving

9. The process by which girls and boys become feminine or masculine is called:
a) gender schema
b) sex typing
c) gender attachment
d) sex role adherence
e) identification

10. A law is made that calls for the arrest and detention of all homeless people. Ruth is opposed to the law and shelters homeless families in her garage. According to this example, which level of morality has Ruth attained?

a) postconventional
b) preconventional
c) conventional
d) unconventional
e) relational

11. According to Kohlberg, which of the following individuals is likely to have attained the postconventional level of moral judgement?

a) Thomas, age 30
b) Theresa, age 35
c) Tim, age 14
d) Tammy, age 8
e) Tanya, age 16

12. You are about to give birth. You know that your infant will have a minor medical problem requiring hospitalisation and therefore separation from you. You ask a psychologist how this will affect bonding. Her answer will most likely be:

a) Bonding at birth is essential for a normal mother-child relationship to emerge
b) Bonding can occur without much mother-child interaction
c) Bonding at birth is good, but is not essential for maternal care
d) The hormones necessary for bonding will be lost if there is no immediate contact
e) The concept of bonding has been completely refuted by research

13. During the sensory-motor stage, infants learn through:

a) thought and imagination
b) abstract thought
c) language and symbolic representation
d) concrete actions/experiences
e) concrete thought and simple operations

14. Stan is angry because he believes his brother has a bigger piece of pie than him. He ignores the fact that his brother's dish is smaller than his. This shows that Stan cannot:

a) organise
b) assimilate
c) accommodate
d) conserve
e) use inductive logic

15. Most college students are in the stage of development that Piaget calls:

a) formal operations
b) concrete operations
c) organisational operations
d) preoperational
e) logical operations

16. Baby Louis is 10 months old. You would expect his language ability to consist of:

a) crying and cooing
b) babbling
c) gestures
d) telegraphic speech
e) mimicking

17. You observe that an infant turns away when you cover your face with a blanket. Which statement about this baby is correct:

a) she has not yet achieved object permanence
b) she has achieved conservation
c) she is playing a game with you
d) she is egocentric
e) she has an internal memory of you

18 A recurrent theme in psychology has been whether differences between individuals are attributable to:

a) nutrition or learning
b) biology or physiology
c) heredity or environment
d) experience or learning
e) genetics or nutrition

19. You ask a group of children why we celebrate Christmas. A preoperational child would respond:

a) "So we can buy gifts for people"
b) "So we can get presents"
c) "To celebrate the birthday of Jesus"
d) "So I can get presents"
e) "To have joy in the middle of summer"

20. Rachel's mother tries to spoon-feed her for the first time. Rachel tries to suck on the spoon, coughing and splattering the food. Her actions represent her attempt to:

a) assimilate
b) accommodate
c) conserve
d) organise
e) operationalise

PARAGRAPH QUESTIONS - MOTIVATION SECTION:

1.   Contrast two theories of the aggression motive, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of each one.

2.   Explain the following equation, giving an example to support your answer:

    Effort = f (expectancy x instrumentality x valence)

3.   Outline the main elements of, and critically evaluate, the theory of Optimal Arousal.

4.   Are teleological and causal explanations of motivation incompatible? Defend your answer.

5.   Explain how a homeostatic mechanism works. Illustrate your answer with a biological and a psychological example.

INTRODUCTORY GROUP ACTIVITIES:

1.   PERCEPTION:

Look at the following stereograms. Can you see the pictures inside the dots? Do you have any idea how the brain sees the figure as three-dimensional?

2.   MOTIVATION:

Look at the magazine adverts you have been given. What motives do you think the advert is appealing to? What features of the advert are used to appeal to this motive?

3.   THINKING:

▶   Brain storm as many uses as you can think of, for a detergent bottle.
▶   You have a round cake, to cut into eight slices using only three cuts. How can you do this.
▶   Quickly sketch each of the following:
    ◆   a chair
    ◆   a three legged seat
    ◆   a two legged seat
    ◆   a one legged seat
    ◆   a seat with no legs

4.   LEARNING:

After eating fish in a restaurant, Mandy got food poisoning. Now she feels ill just looking at fish. How can this be explained using what you know about learning theory.

5.   DEVELOPMENT:

Look at the children's toys I have brought along with me. What stage of development do you think each is most appropriate to, and what skills does each one develop?

1. Critically evaluate the theory of Optimal Arousal.

This theory says all stimulation influences arousal. This depends on its complexity, familiarity, and how soon it was experienced. You work best when arousal is moderate. This is shown on a graph:
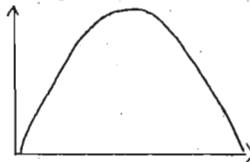
Sometimes high and low arousal is pleasant. This is called telic and paratelic states.

2. Expectancy Theory can be summarised in a single equation:
Effort = f(expectancy x instrumentality x valence). Explain briefly.

Expectancy is whether you expect to succeed at the task. It links to your ability and beliefs and to the self-fulfilling prophecy. The self-fulfilling prophecy often causes depression. Instrumentality is if success brings about an outcome. Valence is how much you value success.

3. Outline the complex interaction of factors that regulate hunger.

Eating is influenced by biological factors. These are brain regulation, glucose regulation and hormone regulation. The lateral hypothalamus makes you stop eating and the ventromedial hypothalamus makes you start eating. Decrease in glucose and insulin also makes you hungry. Eating is also influenced by psychological factors like learned preferences - learning influences how much you eat and when you feel full. Eating is also influenced by food-related cues because the sight of food stimulates the pancreas to secrete insulin and makes you hungry. Eating is also caused by stress. Obesity is weighing 25% more than normal. It is caused by sensitivity to external cues like obese people eat 5 times more ice-cream if its tasty. Its also caused by learning and by a genetic predisposition and by set point theory. Anorexia is 25% weight below normal. Its caused by phsical defects, by conflicts over sex, by family dynamics, by psychological problems and social pressure.

4. Critically evaluate the innate view of aggression.

This view says that aggression is innate. I don't think its a good view because God made people as basically pure and good beings and he wouldn't have made us to be aggressive and violent. I therefore think this view shouldn't be taken seriously at all. It was developed by Freud who's theories are outdated and don't make sense at all. He says people are motivated by sex and aggression which I know isn't true because I'm not motivated by either of those things.

5. Outline some of the environmental factors that influence worker motivation, and suggest ways in which these factors can be maximised:

Work motivation is influenced by 3 factors: complexity, variety and flexibility. There are also 4 core dimensions of jobs. These are variety, autonomy, identity and feedback. Jobs can be made more interesting by job enlargement, job autonomy and job rotation as well as by increasing the feedback that workers get.

6. Discuss the four main types of motivational conflict, giving examples of each. Conclude with a general comment or two about conditions influencing whether a person will approach or avoid a goal.

Approach-approach conflict is when there are two goals that you want to choose between - e.g. which movie to see or which university to go to.
Avoidance-avoidance conflict is when there are two negative goals and you want to avoid both of them e.g. study or fail the course.
Approach-avoidance conflict is when there are positive and negative goals and you can't choose between them e.g. eat junk food or get fat.
Multiple approach-avoidance is when you have several choices to make e.g. have a career and also get married.
Maslow says that these goals are in a hierarchy, so if there is conflict you will alsways choose the lower goal - e.g. eat food or fall in love.

The long-term effect of malnutrition

Richter-Strydom and Griesel (1984) of Unisa did research on the long-term psychological effect of malnutrition on black South African children. As the effect of seriously malnourished children had been well researched, they did their research on young children who were suffering from mild to moderate malnutrition. More specifically, the children were diagnosed three years earlier as suffering from malnutrition and were then placed on a treatment programme. At the time of the research, the children were approximately four-and-a-half years old. The group was then compared with a healthy control group. The researchers found that, regardless of the treatment programme of the previous three years, the children in the experimental group were still smaller and also performed significantly worse in several tests of psychological development including cognitive development.

This important finding has far-reaching implications because it indicates that even mild to moderate malnutrition, which is not always regarded as serious, can have long-term and irreversible negative psychological effects on the child. The finding also supports the many efforts in South Africa to improve the physical and material circumstances of black children. The investment that is made in this regard will, in the future, yield good psychological dividends.

The influence of the black child-minder on child development

The presence of black child-minders in many white households in South Africa has virtually become an institution. The black child-minder often cares for the white child for up to eight hours a day. This raises the question as to what influence, if any, this has on the development of these white children. Divergent opinions have been expressed in this regard. For example, the extended contact between the children and the child-minder could have the effect that children will have a greater acceptance for all other race groups in South Africa (or that the children would lose their parents' cultural values as a result of the long-term exposure to another culture).

According to South African research, however, it seems that in most cases the black child-minder has no significant influence on the general development of white South African children. The reason for this is primarily that the black child-minder, due to political and historical factors, has no power and status in the eyes of the children (Straker, 1990). Wulfsohn (1988: p 161) who completed a doctorate on this topic at the University of South Africa, states as follows: 'In the majority of cases the nanny was found to be a peripheral, shadowy figure, as viewed both by the child and mother. She does not feature strongly in the child's emotional world and for the most part is experienced as a stranger with whom there is no emotional involvement.' This attitude of white children towards black child-minders is, among others, illustrated by observations such as the following made by Wulfsohn:

- When the child came home, she took off her wet shoes and gave them to the nanny without looking at her or saying hello.
- The child snatched her dress from the nanny without any sign of appreciation for the time spent by the nanny getting the dress ready in time.
- Although the nanny was in the room the child acted as if she did not exist.

Some of the mothers also mentioned examples such as the following:

- If I asked my child to tidy up, he tells me that he isn't a nanny.
- When I asked my child to tidy up, she said that Anna could do it because she is a nanny.

The primary and specific long-term effects of such relationships between white children and black child-minders is that the children grow up with a feeling of superiority towards people of a lesser career and of another race. It seems, however, that the blame should not be placed on the shoulders of the children, but rather on those of the parents who according to Straker (1990) and Wulfsohn (1988) create a climate of superiority and racism in the home. This atmosphere not only promotes racism, but also a lack of empathy and understanding for the needs of other people and their worth as human beings.

The influence of violence on children: the South African situation

In an article *Growing up in violent situations – the South African situation* Diana Schmuckler (1990) of the University of the Witwatersand points out that it is unfortunate that not much research has been done on the influence of (mainly political) violence on the development of children. She refers to the research of Dawes conducted on children between the ages of 2 to 17 which indicated a significant correlation between the stress experienced by mothers in these (violent) circumstances and the presence of a variety of stress symptoms in children. This finding confirms the direct relationship between the reactions of the parents and the children. Findings such as these have far-reaching consequences. They indicate that the stress experienced by the parent as a result of the violence, influences the child and can in this way cause a chain reaction, the results of which may still be visible in a later generation.

Schmuckler also refers to research by herself and Lab, completed in 1987 regarding the psychological effect of unrest situations on children growing up in the South African townships. In the drawings that were done by the children, 71 % reflected police or soldiers in the streets where they lived. This indicated that police presence was an important facet of the children's lives at that stage. Only 23 % of the drawings referred to other forms of violence or social problems encountered in the townships. The drawings also indicated specific actions and events depicting violence which indicated how commonplace violence has become in the lives of the children.

The factors that concerned the children most were established by means of a questionnaire: 44 % were worried about being late for school, 47 % were anxious about completing their homework; 31 % were concerned about being sent to the headmaster; 92 % were afraid of being questioned by the police, 96 % were anxious about seeing someone they cared for shot by soldiers and 100 % were concerned about a family member or a friend being detained. According to Schmukler (1990: p 11): 'The force and power of the police presence and the anxiety it causes children in the townships clearly overrides the concerns they have about ordinary worries of childhood.'

In addition, 75 % of the children indicated that a raid by the police was the event they feared most. When the children were asked to wish three wishes, 17 % wished to turn poverty to wealth, 44 % wished for political unrest, violence and inequality to end and 23 % wished for freedom and peace. Schmuckler (1990: p 11) concludes: 'Clearly what is reflected in this study, is a picture of the black child's world dominated by political events, police presence and violence against a backdrop of deprivation and poverty'.

Street children

Although street children have become a general phenomenon in South Africa, there are few people with more than just a superficial knowledge of these children. Unfortunately street children have for years been regarded as 'bothersome' and little research has been done on this topic. The phenomenon of street children in South Africa as is the case in other parts of the world, is associated with socio-cultural factors such as urbanization and poverty which lead to the disintegration of the family unit (Richter, 1988a; 1988b; 1989). Most of the street children in South Africa are from the poorer areas of the black and so-called coloured communities. The personal backgrounds of these children are also characterized by physical, sexual and emotional abuse and by neglect from their families.

Few people have any idea of the precarious situation in which these children find themselves: they usually have little or no contact with their parents, they make money in ways which vary from the selling of newspapers to the selling of sexual services. They are often hungry and at night they sleep in any place which provides a shelter, for example, under bridges and in waterpipes.

Mako from the University of Bophuthatswana (1992) tried to determine the nature of the self-concept of the street children and the quality of their interpersonal relationships. He found that the circumstances of the children are so negative that it caused their self-concept as well as their interpersonal relationships to be significantly poorer than the control group. These findings clearly indicate that not only are the physical and material aspects of street children impaired, but that their circumstances have a negative effect on their personality development. Mako recommends, as have many other researchers, that society should urgently provide facilities, not only to provide a refuge, but also to help them compensate for deficits on several levels of development.

Black students on 'white' university campuses

Political and attitudinal changes in South Africa during the last few years have had an impact on a variety of spheres of society. One of these has been university education where the majority of universities realized that drastic steps would have to be taken to create opportunities for black students (who had been prevented from attending university in the past due to political-historical factors). English-speaking universities in South Africa had already taken the initiative several years ago and Afrikaans universities recently joined in. This has resulted in an increase in the number of black students on so-called white university campuses. How do the black students on these campuses accept the situation and how do they adjust to campus life as compared with the white students?

Several researchers in South Africa (for example, Cooper, 1981; Honikman, 1982) and in the United States (for example, Loo & Rolison, 1986) found that black students had more adjustment problems on all levels than white students.

In a more recent investigation, Leon and Lea (1988) compared a group of black first-year students at the University of Cape Town with a group of white first-year students at the same university. Their findings also indicated that black students experienced more adjustment problems than whites and that these problems were primarily in the the following areas:

- *Material:* the black students mainly experienced problems concerning accommodation, transport and finances. Transport had become a major problem as indicated by a student: 'My friends helped me with some money for the taxi. Then I take the bus or walk to campus – using the library after hours was a problem in this way.' Problems like these had negative influences on the black student's academic performance.
- *Academic:* although black and white students felt that they were unprepared for university, white students fared better academically. The black students, however, had difficulties in indicating the definite causes for their academic problems and were of the opinion that it could be ascribed to a combination of factors. As one student put it: 'I don't know why, it's linked to many things.'
- *Social:* sixty per cent of the black students felt that they do not become involved socially in university life: 'I don't feel at home here – there are too many things to remind me it's a white university.' According to the black students, the university did not do enough to cater for their social and political needs and were only concerned about the needs of white students. They were therefore of the opinion that the policy advocated by the university and what it does in practice are incompatible. Some of the black students were disappointed that people with racist ideas are still encountered at university level.

In comparison, all the white students indicated that they could identify with the values, goals and ideals of the university and that they felt part of the university: 'It's what I expected – a jol' and 'it's a brilliant environment – I'm becoming increasingly more integrated.'

Although the preceding study has certain flaws (for example, the sample was small and the study was only conducted at one university), it does have certain important implications for all South African university authorities. In short, universities will have to look for ways in which to reduce, or hopefully eradicate completely, the negative feelings of black students on formerly white campuses. Leon and Lea (1998: p 19) indicate in this regard: 'This will necessarily involve critical self-examination on the part of the agent of change or a supporter of the status quo. Moreover, further research into the issues and concerns of black students is warranted if these are to be clearly understood by all concerned and if meaningful change is to be affected within predominantly white universities in South Africa.'

IMPROVING EVERYDAY MEMORY

Answer the following "true" or "false."

☐ 1. Memory strategies were recently invented by psychologists.

☐ 2. Imagery can be used to remember concrete words only.

☐ 3. Overlearning information leads to poor retention.

☐ 4. Outlining reading is not likely to affect retention.

☐ 5. Massing practice in one long study session is more efficient than distributing practice across several shorter sessions.

Mnemonic devices are strategies for enhancing memory. They have a long and honorable history, so the first statement is false. In fact, one of the mnemonic devices that we cover in this application—the method of loci—was described in Greece as early as 86–82 B.C. (Yates, 1966). Actually, mnemonic devices were even more crucial in ancient times than today. In ancient Greece and Rome, for instance, paper and pencils were not readily available so people could write down things that they needed to remember. People had to depend heavily on mnemonic devices.

In this Application, we consider how the principles of memory can be employed to enhance your ability to remember things. We discuss everyday memory in general, but emphasize how principles relate to effective studying in school. In the process, you'll learn that all of the true-false statements above are false. So, without further ado, let's begin our coverage by discussing the value of rehearsal.

Engage in Adequate Rehearsal

Practice makes perfect, or so you've heard. In reality, practice is not likely to guarantee perfection, but it usually leads to improved retention. Studies show that retention improves with increased rehearsal. Presumably this improvement occurs because rehearsal helps transfer the information to be remembered into long-term memory.

Continued rehearsal may also pay off by improving your *understanding* of assigned material. As you go over information again and again, your increased familiarity with the material may permit you to focus selectively on the most important points. Bromage and Mayer (1986) examined the effects of repetition in a study in which undergraduate subjects listened to an audiotaped lecture on photography, from one to three times. Information in the lecture was classified into three levels of importance. As Figure 7.28 shows, increased repetition led to increased recall for information at all three levels of importance. However, repetition had its greatest impact on the retention of the *most important* information, yielding enhanced understanding of the lecture.
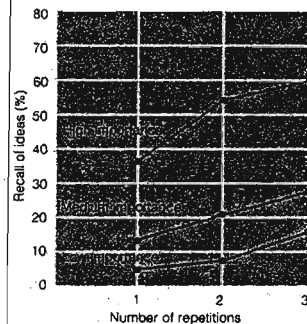
There is evidence that it even pays to overlearn material. *Overlearning* refers to continued rehearsal of material after you first appear to master it. In one study, after subjects mastered a list of nouns (they recited the list without error), Krueger (1929) required them to continue rehearsing for 50% or 100% more trials. Measuring retention at intervals up to 28 days, Krueger found that greater overlearning was related to better recall of the list (see Figure 7.29). The practical implication of this finding is simple: you should not quit rehearsing material as soon as you appear to have mastered it.

Schedule Your Rehearsal as Distributed Practice

Let's assume that you are going to study 9 hours for an exam. Is it better to "cram" all of your study into one 9-hour period (massed practice) or to distribute it among, say, three 3-hour periods on successive days (distributed practice)? The evidence indicates that retention tends to be greater after distributed practice than after massed practice, especially if the intervals between practice periods are fairly long, such as 24 hours (Zechmeister & Nyberg, 1982). Figure 7.30 shows the results of one study on massed versus distributed practice. Studying children (aged 9–14) who practiced a list of words four times, Underwood (1970) found that distributed practice led to larger increases in recall than a similar amount of massed practice.

Why is distributed practice better? This may seem strange, but Keppel (1967) suggests that it's because distributed practice allows *forgetting* to occur. If you wait a day before going over material again, you'll probably forget some of it. This allows you to identify the material that you haven't learned very well, so you can devote extra practice to it or form new memory codes that are more effective.

Minimize Interference

Research suggests that interference is a major cause of forgetting, so you'll probably want to think about how you can minimize interference. This is especially important for students, because memorizing information for one course can interfere with the retention of information in another course. It may help to allocate study for specific courses to specific days. Thorndyke and Hayes-Roth (1979) found that similar material produced less interference when it was learned on different days. Thus, the day before an exam in a course, it's probably best to study for

that course only—if possible. If demands in other courses make that impossible, study the test material last.

Of course, studying for other classes is not the only source of interference in a student's life. Other normal waking activities also produce interference. Therefore, it's a good idea to conduct one last, thorough review of material as close to exam time as possible (Anderson, 1980). This helps you to avoid memory loss due to interference from intervening activities.

Engage in Deep Processing

Although it's important to engage in adequate rehearsal, the research by Craik and Tulving (1975) on levels of processing suggests that how *often* you go over material is less critical than the *depth* of processing that you engage in when you go over it. Thus, if you expect to remember what you read, you have to wrestle fully with its meaning. Many students could probably benefit if they spent less time on rote repetition and devoted more effort to analyzing the meaning of their reading assignments.

Enrich Encoding with Verbal Mnemonics

When working with verbal material, deeper processing usually entails working harder to make information meaningful. But evidence shows that the effort is worthwhile: retention improves as material becomes more meaningful. A very useful strategy is to make material *personally* meaningful. When you read your textbooks, try to relate information to your own life and experience. For example, when you read about classical conditioning, try to think of responses that you make that are due to classical conditioning.

Of course, it's not always easy to make something personally meaningful. For instance, when you study chemistry you may have a hard time relating to polymers at a personal level. Thus, many mnemonic devices—such as acrostics, acronyms, and narrative methods—are designed

to make abstract material more meaningful.

Acrostics and Acronyms

Acrostics are phrases (or poems) in which the first letter of each word (or line) functions as a cue to help you recall more abstract words that begin with the same letter. For instance, you may remember the order of musical notes with the saying "Every good boy does fine" (or "deserves favor"). A slight variation on acrostics is the *acronym*—a word formed out of the first letters of a series of words. Students memorizing the order of colors in the light spectrum often store the name "Roy G. Biv" to remember red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Notice that this acronym takes advantage of chunking.

Narrative Methods

Another useful way to remember a list of words is to create a story that includes the words in the correct order. The narrative increases the meaningfulness of the words and links them in a specific order. Examples of this technique can be seen in Table 7.1.

Figure 7.28 Effects of repetition on recall of high-, medium-, and low-importance ideas. In this study, repetition most aided the recall of high-importance ideas. (Data from Bromage & Mayer, 1986)

Figure 7.29 Effects of overlearning on retention. A comparison of the three forgetting curves suggests that overlearning enhances retention even over lengthy periods of time. (Data from Krueger, 1929)
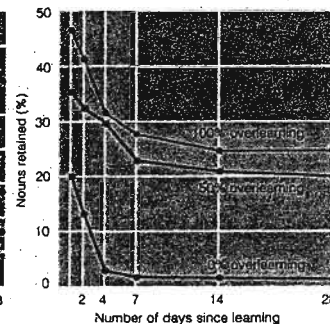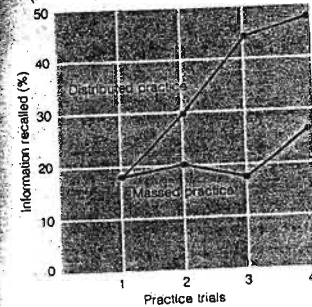
Table 7.1 Word Lists to Be Memorized and Stories Constructed from Them

WORD LISTS	STORIES
Bird Costume Mailbox Head River Nurse Theater Wax Eyelid Furnace	A man dressed in a *Bird Costume* and wearing a *Mailbox* on his *Head* was seen leaping into the *River*. A *Nurse* ran out of a nearby *Theater* and applied *Wax* to his *Eyelids*, but her efforts were in vain. He died and was tossed into the *Furnace*.
Rustler Penthouse Mountain Sloth Tavern Fuzz Gland Antler Pencil Vitamin	A *Rustler* lived in a *Penthouse* on top of a *Mountain*. His specialty was the three-toed *Sloth*. He would take his captive animals to a *Tavern* where he would remove *Fuzz* from their *Glands*. Unfortunately, all this exposure to sloth fuzz cause him to grow *Antlers*. So he gave up his profession and went to work in a *Pencil* factory. As a precaution he also took a lot of *Vitamin* E.

Source: Bower & Clark, 1969
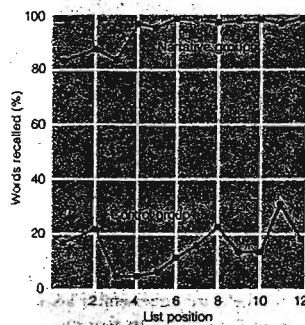
Bower and Clark (1969) found that this procedure greatly enhanced subjects' recall of lists of unrelated words. Figure 7.31 summarizes some of their results.

Why—and how—would you use the narrative method? Let's assume that you always manage to forget to put one item in your gym bag on your way to the pool. Short of pasting a list on the inside of the bag, how can you remember everything you need? You could make up a story that includes the items you need:

The wind and rain in COMBINATION LOCKed out the rescue efforts—nearly. CAP, the flying ace, TOWELed the SOAP from his eyes, pulled his GOGGLES from his SUIT pocket and COMBed the BRUSH for survivors.

Rhymes

Another verbal mnemonic that we often rely on is rhyming. You've probably repeated, "I before E except after C . . ." thousands of times. Perhaps you also remember the number of days in each month with the old standby, "Thirty days hath September. . . ." Rhyming something to remember it is an old and very useful trick.

Enrich Encoding with Visual Imagery

Memory can be greatly enhanced by the use of visual imagery. As you may recall, Allan Paivio (1986) believes that visual images create a second memory code and that two codes are better than one. Many popular mnemonic devices depend on visual imagery, including the following examples.

Link Method

The *link method* involves forming a mental image of items to be remembered in a way that links them together. For instance, suppose that you're going to stop at the drugstore on the way home and you need to remember to pick up a news magazine, shaving cream, film, and pens. To remember these items, you might visualize a public figure likely to be in the magazine shaving with a pen while being photographed. There is evidence that the more bizarre you make your image, the more helpful it will be (McDaniel & Einstein, 1986).

Method of Loci

The *method of loci* involves taking an imaginary walk along a familiar path where you have associated images of items you want to remember with certain locations. The first step is to commit to memory a series of loci, or places along a path. Usually these loci are specific locations in your home or neighborhood. Then envision each thing you want to remember in one of these locations. Try to form distinctive, vivid images. When you need to remember the items, imagine yourself walking along the path. The various loci on your path should serve as cues for the retrieval of the images that you formed (see Figure 7.32).
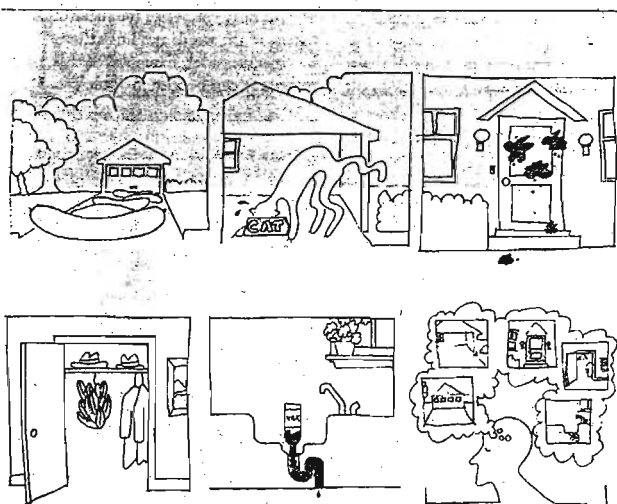
The method of loci assures that

Figure 7.32 The method of loci. In this example from Bower (1970), a person about to go shopping pairs items to remember with familiar places (*loci*) arranged in a natural sequence: (1) hot dogs/driveway; (2) cat food/garage interior; (3) tomatoes/front door; (4) bananas/coat closet shelf; (5) whiskey/kitchen sink. The shopper then used imagery to associate the items on the shopping list with the loci, as shown in the drawing: (1) giant *hot dog* rolls down a *driveway*; (2) a cat noisily devours *cat food* in the *garage*; (3) ripe *tomatoes* are splattered on the *front door*; (4) bunches of *bananas* are hung from the *closet shelf*; (5) the contents of a bottle of *whiskey* gurgle down the *kitchen sink*. As the last panel shows, the shopper recalls the items by mentally touring the loci associated with them. (From Bower, 1970)

items are remembered in their correct order because the order is determined by the sequence of locations along the pathway. The potential effectiveness of this method was demonstrated by Crovitz (1971) who asked subjects to remember a list of 32 words. The subjects instructed in the method of loci recalled an average of about 26 words, compared to only about 7 words for subjects in the control group, who received no special instructions.

Keyword Method

Visual images are also useful when we need to form an association between a pair of items such as a person's name and face, or a foreign word and its English translation. However, there is a potential problem that you may recall from our earlier discussion of visual imagery: it's difficult to generate images to represent abstract words (Paivio, 1969). A way to avoid this problem is to employ the *keyword method*, in which you associate a concrete word with an abstract word and generate an image to represent the concrete word.

A very practical use of this method is to help you remember the names of people you meet. Just convert the name into a visual image and then link the image to a prominent feature of the person's face (Morris, Jones, & Hampson, 1978). The utility of this technique obviously depends on how easy it is to form an image from a name. Some names should be fairly easy, such as Smith (form an image of a blacksmith, perhaps hammering out a crooked nose). Other names, such as Gordon or Detterman, may require associating a concrete word to the name and then forming an image of the associated word. The associated word, which is the keyword, should sound like the name that's being learned. *Garden* is an example of a keyword for *Gordon*. And *debtor man* might be a good keyword for Detterman, if you formed an image of Mr. Detterman dressed in ragged clothes.

The keyword method has been used to enhance students' memory of foreign words (Atkinson & Raugh,

Figure 7.33 A networking of ideas applied to material from a nursing textbook.
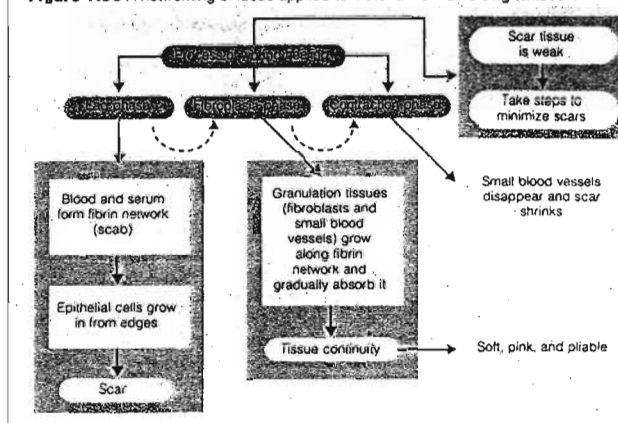
1975). For example, imagine that you're having difficulty remembering that *boulangerie* is French for *bakery*. To remember this French word you might use the keyword, *boo-lingerie*, and picture a ghost hanging lingerie in your favorite bakery.

Organize Information

As you've learned, organizational frameworks play a critical role in long-term memory. Retention tends to be greater when information is well organized. Gordon Bower (1970) has shown that hierarchical organization is particularly helpful. It may therefore be a good idea to *outline* reading assignments, since outlining forces you to organize material hierarchically.

Along similar lines, Dansereau (1985) has experimented with a technique called networking in helping students to master information gleaned from textbooks. *Networking* involves organizing information into networks consisting of nodes and links. These networks resemble the *semantic networks* described by Collins and Loftus (1975). As students read a text, they try to identify important concepts or ideas (nodes) and represent their interrelationships (links) to form the network. Students are instructed to diagram their networks to create visual and spatial representations of how the material is organized.

Figure 7.33 shows an example of a network from a chapter in a nursing textbook.

The advantage of networking was demonstrated in a study in which students read a 3000-word excerpt from a geology textbook (Holley et al., 1979). Students who were taught how to construct networks did significantly better on an essay test than students who used their normal study methods. However, the two groups did not differ in performance on short-answer or multiple-choice tests. This suggests that networking may help you to organize main ideas more than to improve your memory for details.

Take Advantage of Retrieval Cues

When your memory lapses, try to take advantage of any retrieval cues that happen to surface. For instance, if you think you know the first letter of a word that you're groping for, use that letter to guide your memory search. "Hunches" like this often *are* related to the forgotten information (Read & Bruce, 1982). Many people fail to appreciate the potential value of these retrieval cues and don't devote much thought to them. Also, remember the value of context cues. You may be able to jog your memory by reinstating the context in which you learned the forgotten information.